Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

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Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

ABSTRACT. Typological approaches in research of intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) have been discussed on the basis of their validity and applicability in professional practice; yet, most of the published studies on offender typologies are limited due to the use of relatively small, non-representative samples. The current study explored typologies of IPVAW perpetrators in a large-scale representative Spanish sample ($N = 9,731$ cases extracted from the Comprehensive Monitoring System of Gender-Based Violence Cases; VioGén System), according to classic batterer typologies proposed by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994). To this end, the risk factors measured by the most extended Spanish police recidivism risk assessment tool (*Valoración Policial del Riesgo*; VPR) were used as clustering variables. Multiple correspondence analyses revealed the appropriateness of a bi-dimensional model to conceptualize IPVAW offender typologies. Our four-group solution may be described based on the levels of instability and antisociality of IPVAW offenders, as objectively measured by $VPR_{5.0}$ risk indicators. Statistically significant differences between the IPVAW suggested typologies were found on all indicators, except for the presence of perpetrators younger than 24 years old and the presence of bidirectional intimate partner violence, which were equally distributed across the four groups. High Instability/Low Antisociality (HiLa) and High Instability/High Antisociality (HiHa) individuals shared most risk indicators related to the aggressor's psychological instability; whereas HiHa and Low Instability/High Antisociality (LiHa) men endorsed more antisociality indicators than statistically expected. The Low Instability/Low Antisociality group (LiLa) was characterized by the less presence VPR risk indicators. Although the four subtypes identified in our study resembled classic typologies, we propose a new subtype, with high levels of instability and antisociality (i.e., HiHa). This work contributes to existing knowledge of the heterogeneity of these men, by providing useful typologies that can help inform prevention and treatment.

Keywords: batterers; intimate partner violence; gender-based violence; domestic violence; typology; VioGén System; VPR.

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) represents a global human rights and public health problem (World Health Organization, 2013) and, thus, it constitutes a major concern among researchers, professionals, and public administrators, who increasingly call for more effective three-level prevention strategies (Ellsberg et al., 2015; García-Moreno et al., 2015). IPV includes physical violence, sexual violence, stalking or psychological aggression committed by a current or former intimate partner; and, although it may be bidirectional (Bates, 2016; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012), many of the aggressors are men, and the majority of victims are women. In this regard, the World Health Organization (2013) estimated that 30% of women around the world had suffered physical and/or sexual IPV at some point in their lives.

Intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) is legally referred to as *gender-based violence* in Spain (see Organic Act 1/2004 of 28 December on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence), and is considered the manifestation of discrimination, the situation of inequality and the power relations of men over women, exercised over them by those who are or have been their spouses or who are or have been linked to them by similar relationships of affectivity, even without cohabitation. According to the last macro survey on Violence Against Women (Delegación del Gobierno contra la Violencia de Género, 2020), 14.2% of women in Spain had suffered physical and/or sexual IPV, and 31.9% psychological IPV, over their lives; in this regard, 655 intimate partner homicides (IPHs) were officially registered in the country from 2007 to 2017, with a slight negative trend over the last years (Torrecilla et al., 2019).

IPVAW offender typologies

A better understanding of existing typologies of IPVAW perpetrators (and the corresponding specific risk factors that may underlie each type of offending) is crucial in

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

terms of research, policy and practice (Cavanaugh & Gelles, 2005). In this sense, prior research on batterer typologies has provided insights on the heterogeneous nature of IPVAW (Dixon & Browne, 2003), and, thus, on the possibility of personalizing interventions, risk management procedures, police and judicial measures, based on the characteristics of the offenders. Typological research has pointed out the role of offender's personality and psychopathological characteristics, both in understanding IPVAW (i.e., etiological explanation) and in the development of tailored effective treatment responses for subtypes of perpetrators (Amor et al., 2009; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Lila et al., 2019; Weber & Bouman, 2020), in accordance with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model of rehabilitation (Bonta & Andrews, 2017). With regard to victim protection, the ability to identify subtypes of IPVAW offenders may also contribute to more accurate identifications of offenders, case formulation and better risk prediction, leading to proportional law enforcement protection measures and the optimization of the scarce resources available (Cavanaugh & Gelles, 2005; González-Álvarez et al., 2018).

In an already classic review, Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) proposed a theoretical typology consisting of three subtypes of marital violence perpetrators, named family only (FO), borderline/dysphoric (BD), and generally violent/antisocial (GVA), that would be identified using three descriptive dimensions (i.e., severity of husband's marital violence, presence of extra-familial violent behavior, and psychopathology/personality disorders). FO batterers (50%) showed low levels in all three dimensions, whereas BD individuals (25%) would be the most psychologically distressed and the most likely to show borderline personality characteristics; besides, they were predicted to engage in moderate to severe marital abuse. GVA batterers (25%) would be the most likely to engage in extra-familial violence, with moderate to severe levels of marital violence. This group would also be the most likely to endorse characteristics of the antisocial personality disorder (e.g.,

5

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

arrests, criminal behavior, substance abuse), and, thus, their marital violence would be better

conceptualized as part of their general engagement in antisocial and violent behavior.

These three theoretical typologies were empirically tested in the United States of

America (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2000) in a validation study using self-reported clinical

measures from a sample of 102 maritally violent couples from the community, including two

comparison groups of nonviolent couples (i.e., maritally distressed and non-distressed). In

this case, four different clusters were identified, although three of them resembled the

predicted subtypes (i.e., FO, 36%; GVA, 16%; and BD, 15%). The new IPVAW offender

subtype was labeled "low-level antisocial" (LLA, 33%) and showed moderately low scores

on measures of antisociality, marital violence, and general violence. This cluster fell between

the FO and GVA clusters (higher scores than FO individuals and lower scores than GVA men

on all three measures).

Additionally, considering the role of antisocial behavior in understanding IPVAW,

Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan (2004) explored the possibility of conceptualizing these

subtypes along a continuum of increased antisociality (i.e., FO subgroup followed by LLA

and GVA individuals, classifying the latter as the most antisocial). However, BD individuals

and their distinguishing characteristics (i.e., fear of abandonment, preoccupied or fearful

attachment, dependency) could not be easily placed along this continuum, suggesting the

need of a bi-dimensional model (i.e., antisocial and borderline/dysphoric dimensions) to

better conceptualize all four subgroups, as well as the variability of men included in these

prototypical subtypes along both dimensions.

Studies on IPVAW offender typologies published since Holtzworth-Munroe and

Stuart's (1994) review have generally supported their theoretical proposal, identifying two

(e.g., "instrumental" vs. "impulsive"; Tweed & Dutton, 1998; "cobras" and "pitbulls";

Gottman et al., 1995) or three offender subtypes (Delsol et al., 2003; Hamberger et al., 1996;

Huss & Ralston, 2008; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2000; Waltz et al., 2000; White & Gondolf, 2000). More recently, Eckhardt, Holtzworth-Munroe, Norlander and Sibley (2008) also detected the four empirical subtypes in a sample of 199 men court-mandated to a batterer intervention program (BIP): LLA (43%), FO (31%), BD (20%), and GVA (6%). Likewise, Weber and Bouman (2020) found the four subtypes in a sample of 110 male IPVAW perpetrators who had been advised to seek treatment at a community-based Dutch forensic psychiatric facility: FO (32%), GVA (27%), LLA (22%), and BD (19%).

In Spain, both theoretical (e.g., Amor et al., 2009; Torres, Lemos-Giráldez, & Herrero, 2013) and empirical research on batterer typologies (e.g., Boira & Jodrá, 2013; García-Jiménez, Godoy-Fernández, Llor-Esteban, & Ruiz-Hernández, 2014; Herrero, Torres, Fernández-Suárez, & Rodríguez-Díaz, 2016; Loinaz, 2014; Loinaz, Ortiz-Tallo, Sánchez, & Ferragut, 2011) have also been conducted. In this regard, a particularly noteworthy study (Loinaz, 2014) used the risk factors measured by the Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk (B-SAFER; Kropp, Hart, & Belfrage, 2010) as clustering variables in a sample of 100 IPVAW imprisoned offenders in Spain (as opposed to self-reported clinical measures used in previously described studies). The study identified two offender subgroups labeled "antisocial/pathological" (similar to the GVA subgroup) and "non-pathological" (equivalent to FO offenders). Over an average follow-up period of 15 months ($n = 40$), antisocial/pathological individuals showed 21% recidivism rates, whereas 12.5% in the non-pathological group reoffended.

Nevertheless, there still exists a debate regarding the conceptual and clinical utility of typological approaches (Capaldi & Kim, 2007; Dixon & Wride, 2020; Ward & Carter, 2019), pointing toward a need for new ways to develop IPVAW classification systems, such as functional typologies that would take into consideration the specific purpose and scope of such classifications. Taking all this into consideration, there is still work to be done to better

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

define the heterogeneity of IPVAW offenders and to translate it into sustainable

improvements in predictive and preventive outcomes in law enforcement and forensic

settings.

Purpose of the study

The main goal of the current study was to identify IPVAW offender typologies in a

large-scale representative Spanish sample of gender-based violence cases. To this end, the

risk factors measured by the Police Risk Assessment tool (*Valoración Policial del Riesgo*;

VPR; Spanish actuarial protocol proven useful to predict and manage risk in cases of

IPVAW; López-Ossorio et al., 2020) were used as clustering variables. Based on prior

typological research, and considering the representativeness of our sample (law enforcement

dataset, not limited to prison population), the inclusion of all levels of IPVAW (including all

reported cases, regardless of their severity), and the criminological relevance of all the

variables included in the VPR (not limited to self-reported measures); we expected to obtain a

valid classification of IPVAW offenders, with conceptual and practical utility.

The research findings may have implications for forensic assessments, case

formulation and risk management, and be helpful in improving the police protection of

IPVAW victims, by the adoption of early protective measures matched to the risk posed by

the aggressor. Furthermore, our results may assist in formulating treatment goals for different

offender sub-types, aiming to improve the effectiveness of BIPs.

Method

Participants

The final sample consisted of 9,731 cases extracted from the Comprehensive

Monitoring System of Gender-Based Violence Cases (VioGén System; González-Álvarez,

López-Ossorio, Urruela, & Rodríguez-Díaz, 2018); a computer application which gathers

information on all reported cases of gender-based violence in Spain. To our knowledge, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) from other countries do not integrate or store risk assessments carried out on IPVAW cases in national computerized databases; thus, the VioGén System cannot be compared with other governmental IPVAW monitoring systems. In all cases, the offender was a man and the victim a woman. The mean age of the perpetrators was 39.7 years (SD = 12.36; range = 14-93; Mdn = 38), and they were mostly Spanish nationals (78.6%; N = 2,182 due to missing information in this regard). Victims were also mostly Spanish nationals (75.6%; N = 2,181) and their mean age was 36.1 years (SD = 11.74; range = 12-89; Mdn = 35). With regard to LEAs in charge of the cases, 58.6% of the complaints were made in the territory covered by *Policía Nacional* (responsible for urban areas, cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants), 37% in the service area of *Guardia Civil* (responsible for small cities located in rural areas, with exceptions), and the remaining 3.5% within the area covered by Navarre's Regional Police (serving the Autonomous Community of Navarre). Cases investigated in two of the seventeen Spanish Autonomous Communities (Catalonia and the Basque Country) are recorded in other IPVAW monitoring systems and, thus, were not included in our study.

Procedure

We conducted a retrospective study of all gender-based violence cases (first complaints made by female victims) registered in the VioGén System between October and December 2016, provided by the Secretary of State for Security (Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs). To this end, 10,623 cases were extracted from the VioGén System at the end of January 2018, resulting in a follow-up period ranging between 13 and 15 months (depending on the date of the initial complaint).

In Spain, once a woman reports IPVAW, police officers investigate the situation and prepare a detailed proceeding for the Judge. Police officers investigating the case use the data

of their crime investigation to register and activate the case on the VioGén System (i.e., all gender-based violence cases reported within the VioGén territory are included in the system). Every case is then assessed with the VPR (González-Álvarez et al., 2018; see below) and, according to the recidivism risk level detected, proportional police protection measures are adopted. If new relevant information about the case (e.g., victim and offender testimonies, documental reports, crime scene investigation, eyewitness testimony) within a short period of time, a new VPR may be conducted and saved as the most current assessment.

All cases analyzed in our study included all the VPRs conducted by the police officers, and some included additional sociodemographic information about the victims and the offenders (to describe the sample; although these variables were not mandatory to complete the VPR assessment). Data extraction was refined, excluding those cases not including a VPR, duplicated cases and outliers, resulting in a total sample of 9,731 valid cases.

Instruments

VPR version 4.0 was used to initially assess the cases, as this was the most current version of the tool at the time these cases were included in the VioGén System. This is a validated police recidivism risk assessment tool (López-Ossorio, González-Álvarez, et al., 2019) including 39 risk indicators and used in professional practice. The current VPR$_{5.0}$ includes 35 risk indicators (some of which can be unfolded to specify IPVAW severity or type, resulting in a total of 46 options); however, it was not available until March 2019 (López-Ossorio, Loinaz, et al., 2019). Nevertheless, only a few indicators from VPR$_{4.0}$ were discarded in the new version (as they did not contribute to recidivism prediction) and only a new one was incorporated (i.e., perpetrator younger than 24 years old; López-Ossorio et al., 2020).

Measures

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

With the aim of creating typologies based on risk indicators available at the time VPR$_{4.0}$ was superseded by version 5.0, only VPR$_{4.0}$ risk indicators included in VPR$_{5.0}$ (adding the age of the perpetrator at the time of the index offense) were used as the main dichotomous (presence/absence) variables in this study, as they provided sufficient information on antisocial and psychological variables to build batterer typologies. These indicators were grouped into five factors (see Table 1). Factor 1 included six risk indicators related to the severity of the reported IPVAW episode and Factor 2 comprised 15 risk indicators related to the aggressor. Factor 3 included five indicators of victim vulnerability, whereas Factor 4 was composed of three indicators related to children. Factor 5 included the last four indicators, linked to aggravating circumstances.

Data analysis

First, multiple correspondence analysis (MCA; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006) was used to assess potential relationships between the VPR risk indicators (categorical variables) and to empirically identify any risk indicator combinations that might characterize the Spanish batterers. Grouped indicators were subsequently referred to as components (i.e., meaningful IPVAW themes or dimensions including interrelated clusters of variables). Risk indicators with primary component loadings of .25 or above (and minimum cross-loading) were considered for interpretation purposes (Linting & van der Kooij, 2012); the other indicators were used as supplementary variables for the interpretation.

Next, each component was converted into an index. To this end, each variable in the component was added to one another and then divided by the total number of variables. The values of the scores on these indexes ranged from 0 to 1, with "0" indicating a case did not have any of the risk factors present, and "1" indicating the case scored positively on all risk factors. These indexes were then analyzed using a two-step cluster analysis, to identify groups of cases that shared similar characteristics, obtaining empirical IPVAW typologies.

11

Finally, clusters were compared using cross-tabulations to identify significant differences between them which might contribute to the description of each typology. Chi-square tests were conducted and, where χ^2 was significant, corrected standardized residuals (*CSR*; < -2; > 2) were used to determine which observed cells mainly contributed to this significance. Furthermore, Cramér's *V* was used as the effect size measure (*V* values of .10, .30, and .50 were considered small, moderate, and large effect sizes, respectively; Cohen, 1988). All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS Version 21 statistical software Package.

Results

Groups of indicators

The MCA revealed the appropriateness of a bi-dimensional solution (eigenvalues > 2), which accounted for 43.2% of the total variance (Linting & van der Kooij, 2012). As shown in Table 2, the MCA identified 12 risk indicators with sufficient contributions within the two components.

The first component accounted for 26.2% of the variance and included eight primary indicators related to typical IPVAW behaviors (i.e., jealousy, stalking, control, threats and escalation). Supplementary variables within this component were related to the presence of suicidal ideas or attempts, suicide threats from the aggressor, substance abuse, and presence of life problems. Accordingly, this component was interpreted as the offenders' psychological instability. The second component accounted for 16.9% of the variance and was labeled "antisociality", as it included the four VPR indicators related to the aggressor's criminal history.

Two dimension indexes

After the conversion of both components into two independent indexes (i.e., instability and antisociality), perpetrators showed a mean score of .34 on instability (SD = .28) and of .18 (SD = .25) on the antisociality index. Next, the two-step cluster analysis (see Table 3) automatically identified three groups with a good cluster quality score (> .5; Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011). The first group was comprised of 3,949 perpetrators (40.6%), with low scores on both instability (.10) and antisociality indexes (.06; LiLa); the second cluster captured 2,967 offenders (30.5%), with high instability (.60) but low antisociality (.02; HiLa); whereas men in the third cluster (n = 2,815; 28.9%) showed high scores on both indexes (instability = .41; antisociality = .51; HiHa).

A four-cluster solution also showed a good fit (> .5; Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011); furthermore, it provided a better typology conceptualization than the automatic three-cluster model. Clusters 1 (n = 3,949 offenders; 40.6%; instability = .10; antisociality = .06; named LiLa) and 2 (n = 2,674; 27.5%; instability = .57; antisociality = .00; HiLa) remained stable; whereas the previous third cluster was split into two groups: Cluster 3 (n = 2,083; 21.4%; instability = .61; antisociality = .43; HiHa), and Cluster 4 (n = 1,025; 10.5%) with low instability (.13) but high antisociality scores (.62; LiHa).

Additionally, an eight-cluster solution was explored, resulting in a subdivision of clusters into intermediate subgroups with medium levels of instability/antisociality (see Table 3). Taking into account the large size of our sample, it was expected that the more clusters were explored, the more intermediate groups would be detected, increasing the complexity of the model. Thus, considering that the four-group solution (i.e., LiLa, HiLa, HiHa, and LiHa) may be described along two orthogonal dimensions based on their high/low scores on (1) instability, and (2) antisociality (see Figure 1), we decided to use this four-cluster model in subsequent analyses.

Spanish IPVAW offender typologies

13

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

After classifying individual cases into the four clusters, differences between their risk indicators were explored and reported in Tables 4, 5, and 6 for each VPR factor. Statistically significant differences between clusters were found in all indicators, except for indicators 23 (*the perpetrator is under 24 years old*) and 33 (*bidirectional violence*), which were equally distributed across the four groups. HiLa and HiHa individuals scored positively in more VPR risk indicators than statistically expected, unlike the other two clusters (i.e., LiLa and LiHa). Furthermore, these two groups shared most risk indicators related to the aggressor's psychological instability (e.g., severe and very serious psychological violence, threats to harm the victim, death threat, aggression escalation, exaggerated jealousy or suspicion of infidelity, controlling behavior, stalking behavior). With regard to risk indicators related to the antisocial dimension, HiHa and LiHa individuals showed similar characteristics, endorsing more antisociality indicators (e.g., criminal records, break of sentence conditions, physical or sexual aggression records, records of gender-based violence against other intimate partners) than statistically expected.

Most HiLa individuals where psychologically violent against their intimate partners (84.9%) and threatened to harm them (89%); with regard to their victims, they were less likely to present with substance abuse problems (1.5%) than the other victims. HiLa individuals were more likely than expected to be sexually violent, threatening suicide, show aggression escalation, and display controlling behavior. Additionally, cases within the HiLa group were more likely to show other risk indicators such as victim's mental disorder, disability or severe illness, victims in care of children, threats made by the aggressor to harm children, and the victim's communication of her desire to end the relationship. When analyzing the age ranges of the perpetrators, this group showed the greatest proportion of underage (< 18; 1.2%) and older offenders (> 64; 5.8%; χ^2 (18, N = 9,728) = 185.89, p <

.001, $V = .08$), and individuals were distributed homogeneously in terms of their country of origin (same proportion of Spanish and foreign nationals).

The HiHa cluster was mostly made up of men with criminal records (100%) in the age range of 31 to 40 (34.4%), who were psychologically violent against their intimate partners (88.5%) and threatened to harm them (90.4%). This cluster accumulated a slightly higher proportion of Spanish aggressors than foreign nationals (χ^2 (3, $N = 2,182$) = 9.022, $p < .05$; $V = .064$). HiHa individuals showed the highest proportions of severe and very serious psychological (35.5%) and physical (14.7%) violence against their partners, and were more likely than expected to use weapons against their victims (cutting weapon, firearm, and/or blunt object); utter death threats; experience stress in their lives (due to economic and legal problems); cause material damage; display aggressive behavior against third parties or animals; and utter threats and slights toward third parties. This group was made up of a greater proportion of individuals who presented with mental or psychiatric disorders (8.1%), substance abuse (58.9%), and childhood victimization within their families (16.1%). Additionally, victims of HiHa individuals were more likely to lack social support (16.8%) and think the aggressor might kill them (55.4%).

The typology LiLa stands out for presenting far fewer cases than expected in all VPR indicators, except for indicators 2 (*physical violence*), 4.2 (*use of a firearm*), 26 (*victim's substance abuse*), with no statistically significant differences between observed and expected cases, and indicator 28 (*victim's foreign origin*), with significantly more cases than expected. Men within this group were distributed homogeneously in terms of their age, although a slightly higher proportion of African aggressors (Moroccan) was observed (*CSR* = 2.9).

Finally, the LiHa group was characterized by a significant presence of risk indicators related to the antisocial dimension (i.e., presence of criminal records, past breaks of sentence conditions, physical or sexual aggression records, and records of gender-based violence

15

against other intimate partners). In addition, individuals within this group were significantly

more likely to use physical violence against their intimate partner (75.2%), and their victims

were more likely to report substance abuse (6.3%) and to have reported other offenders in the

past (24.3%). The aggressors were equally distributed in terms of their age and country of

origin.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to empirically evaluate the ability of the latest

version of the VPR (the most extended Spanish police recidivism risk assessment tool) to

classify a large and nationally representative sample of IPVAW offenders in Spain, according

to classic batterer typologies. This work contributes to existing knowledge of the

heterogeneity of these men, by providing useful typologies that will assist in the improvement

of police work preventing new IPVAW and help tailoring BIPs according to the risk, needs

and responsivity of each subgroup, hence reducing recidivism.

Results from the MCA analysis showed that 12 of the 46 VPR indicators empirically

contributed to the two classic classification dimensions (i.e., antisociality and

psychopathology) of IPVAW offenders. Although in our case, the term "instability" was used

instead of "psychopathology", since we analyzed a large non-clinical community sample, in

which not much psychopathology was to be expected, as confirmed by the low frequencies of

the few indicators in this regard. It should also be noted that VPR is not a psychological

diagnostic tool; thus, mental health issues were only assessed by some of their behavioral

correlates. In this regard, it was found that those indicators related to "psychopathology"

(e.g., presence of suicidal ideas or attempts, substance abuse, life problems) were placed

automatically by the MCA in a different dimension from that of antisociality. Even though

these indicators did not contribute to the final bi-dimensional solution, they were clearly

16

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

related to those risk indicators related to a problematic or unstable relational dynamic included in the explanatory model (i.e., severe and very serious psychological violence, exaggerated jealousy or suspected infidelity, controlling behaviors, stalking behavior and control, threats to harm the victim and aggression escalation). Conversely, antisocial indicators placed in the second dimension by the MCA were clearly related to the four VPR risk indicators associated with the offender's criminal history (i.e., presence of a criminal record, past breaks of sentence conditions, physical or sexual aggression records, gender-based violence records against other female intimate partners) included in the final model. As proposed by Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan (2004), our findings point toward the ability to use two different and real dimensions to classify IPVAW offenders, as well as the usefulness of police data for classificatory purposes, rather than self-reported measures; as previously found by Loinaz (2014), using another actuarial risk assessment tool (i.e., B-SAFER).

In this study, the VPR scores of each offender were converted using two indexes reflecting the presence of risk factors associated to each dimension, and groups of individuals who shared similar characteristics were identified using a two-step cluster analysis. We identified at least three subgroups of IPVAW offenders (i.e., Spanish typologies); although a four-cluster solution was preferred, as it was easily interpretable using two orthogonal dimensions (i.e., four different groups with high/low scores in each dimension). Additionally, the four-cluster solution provided a better typology conceptualization, splitting a big antisocial-unstable group of offenders into two different subgroups, and, thus, isolating a new cluster of high antisocial but slightly unstable offenders.

According to our findings, 40.6% of Spanish batterers could be grouped into a low-instability/low-antisociality cluster (labeled as LiLa typology), characterized by the less presence of almost all VPR risk indicators. This typology would fit the FO classic typology (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994), representing a

subgroup of individuals (36%−50%) that would show the lowest levels of marital violence, psychological and sexual abuse, and would be less likely to display violent behavior out of home or to have related legal problems, with little or no evidence of psychopathology. Our results would also support prior findings by Loinaz (2014) on the existence of a non-pathological group accumulating specialized batterers (i.e., family-only violent men) with a low presence of indicators associated with violence against third parties. Contrary to expectations (Holtzworth-Munroe & Meehan, 2004; Stith et al., 2004), LiLa offenders were not more likely than the other men to respond to female aggressions in a violent manner (as measured by the "bidirectional violence" risk indicator).

The second typology accumulated offenders with high instability but low antisocial features (HiLa; 27.5%). These men were less likely to have a prior criminal history, although they endorsed an unstable profile associated with controlling behavior, harassment, jealousy, sexual violence, suicidal ideas/attempts, and suicide threats toward the partner (probably to maintain the relationship, due to dependency and fear of rejection). This cluster would correspond to the classic BD typology (approximately 25% of IPVAW offenders), made of men displaying moderate to severe wife abuse, but not much violence out of home, that would be involved in unstable interpersonal relationships (e.g., fear of abandonment, jealousy, emotional lability).

The third typology grouped 10.5% of the sample that was characterized by low instability but a high presence of antisocial indicators (LiHa). This group would match the GVA classic group, described as a cluster composed by men without mental disorders who would be more likely to be involved with delinquent peers, show criminal records (including both IPV and extra-familial violence), substance abuse, and moderate to severe levels of marital violence.

18

Finally, and as a result of crossing the two aforementioned independent empirical dimensions, we identified a fourth cluster composed of individuals with high instability and high antisocial features (HiHa, 21.4%) which had not been detected in prior studies. These IPVAW offenders showed the highest incidence of mental/psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, stress in their lives (due to economic and judicial problems), and childhood victimization within their families. In addition, they were more likely to engage in severe and very serious physical violence against their parents, use weapons, uttering death threats, cause material damage, behave in an aggressive manner against third parties or animals, utter threats and slights toward third parties. This group also presented with more criminal versatility (e.g., past breakings of sentence conditions, physical or sexual aggression records, and records of gender-based violence against other intimate partners). In this sense, it would be of interest to explore in future research whether this group of individuals corresponds to the subgroup with the highest risk (e.g., higher recidivism rates, more disruptive individuals, etc.), in order to adjust the risk management system and deploy immediately (i.e., following the first complaint) the most intensive police and judicial protection measures for their victims. This cluster did not resemble the classic LLA subtype, although we hypothesize this subgroup would arise if the two-step cluster analysis would be forced to a solution that would detect more intermediate subgroups (e.g., LiMa and MiMa typologies identified using an eight-cluster solution; see Table 3).

Limitations and future directions

Most of the published studies on IPVAW offender typologies inform as limitations the use of relatively small, non-representative samples, which would affect their validity and applicability in professional practice. Additionally, the use of prison-only samples would exclude less severe cases from the analyses (e.g., victim complaints without associated legal measures), while the use of community-only samples would exclude more harmful behaviors

punishable by imprisonment (e.g., IPHs). Likewise, the vulnerability to self-report bias would entail further validity limitations in those studies that do not use more objective measures (such as actuarial risk assessments tools).

In our case, a major concern for research based on police data is that the information gleaned from law enforcement agencies may not represent the full extent of any offending (i.e., the police cannot assume that no incriminating information remains undetected). In order to overcome this limitation, only consolidated VPRs were analyzed (i.e., most current assessment including all gathered information). Additionally, the use of police data excluded from the sample many violent partners that had not yet been identified as IPVAW offenders (e.g., only 21.7% of IPVAW victims in Spain have reported their aggressor; Delegación del Gobierno contra la Violencia de Género, 2020). Nevertheless, to our knowledge, the current sample represents, to date, the largest and most representative sample used in typological studies.

Moreover, our sample was limited to IPVAW offences reported in Spain. In this regard, intercultural differences in the profile of IPVAW offenders might result in different offender typologies. To this end, we encourage new large-scale empirical typological studies in geographically and culturally different samples, which might provide new evidence about the cross-cultural validity of this suggested classification. In addition, it would be of interest to observe the stability of the four IPVAW typologies after a follow-up period (i.e., whether instability/antisociality scores would change over time; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2003). This would contribute to our knowledge of the risk posed by each typology, which could help inform choices on the deployment of proportional protection measures for the victim by law enforcement.

Additionally, considering these typologies have been created using risk indicators as clustering variables, BIPs effectiveness might be improved by matching interventions to these

Male perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women: A Spanish typology

batterer subtypes (e.g., IPVAW typologies would help identify high-risk subgroups in need for more intensive interventions). Although, in the case of penitentiary-based samples, the likely over-representation of severe IPVAW (associated with longer prison sentences) might lead to a lack of representativeness of the less violent IPVAW offender subtypes (e.g., LiLa; Herrero et al., 2016).

Conclusion

In sum, this study supports prior evidence on the heterogeneity of batterers (Delsol et al., 2003; Dixon & Browne, 2003), providing a Spanish typology of IPVAW offenders that resembles classic typologies (Amor et al., 2009). The four subtypes identified in our study (i.e., LiLa, LiHa, HiLa, HiHa) differed on two independent dimensions (i.e., instability and antisociality), which were objectively assessed using the VPR$_{5.0}$ risk indicators. As a novelty, we propose a new subtype, with high levels of instability and antisociality (i.e., HiHa), as a more representative IPVAW offender subtype than the classic LLA subgroup.

Despite the long existence of classic IPVAW typologies, treatment programs adapted to them have not yet been implemented, which would prevent clear conclusions about their potential utility. According to our results, we would recommend to address the specific dynamic criminogenic needs of each typology by tailoring new differentiated BIPs that would pinpoint relevant therapeutic ingredients for each subgroup (e.g., including behavioral and cognitive techniques commonly used in substance abuse treatment would be recommended in BIPs for HiHa individuals), without forgetting the importance of risk and responsivity considerations for each of the members of the therapeutic group (Bonta & Andrews, 2017).

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Table 1. *VPR4.0 risk indicators included in VPR5.0*

Factor 1: reported IPVAW episode

1. Psychological violence *(mild, severe, and very serious)*
2. Physical violence *(mild, severe, and very serious)*
3. Sexual violence *(mild, severe, and very serious)*
4. Use of weapons against the victim *(cutting weapon, firearm, and/or blunt object)*
5. Threats to harm the victim *(severe threats to harm the victim, suicide threats from the aggressor, and death threat)*
6. Escalation of the aggression in the last 6 months

Factor 2: aggressor

7. Exaggerated jealousy or suspicion of infidelity
8. Controlling behavior
9. Stalking behavior
10. Life problems *(economic or work-related problems, and/or legal problems)*
11. Material damage
12. Disrespect toward an authority figure
13. Aggression against third parties or animals
14. Threats and slights toward third parties
15. Criminal records
16. Break of sentence conditions
17. Physical or sexual aggression records
18. Records of gender-based violence against other intimate partners
19. Mental or psychiatric disorder
20. Suicidal ideas or attempts
21. Substance abuse
22. Childhood victimization within the family
23. Perpetrator younger than 24 years old

Factor 3: victim vulnerability

24. Mental or psychiatric disorder, severe illness, and/or any kind of disability
25. Suicidal ideas or attempts
26. Substance abuse
27. Lack of social support
28. Foreign origin

Factor 4: children

29. The victim has minors in her care
30. The aggressor threats to harm children
31. The victim fears that minors will be attacked

Factor 5: aggravating circumstances

32. The victim has reported other offenders in the past for IPVAW
33. Bidirectional violence
34. The victim has communicated to the aggressor her desire to end the relationship
35. The victim thinks that the aggressor may kill her

Table 2. *Component loadings*

VPR Risk Indicators	Presence of the indicator (%)	Component 1	Component 2
1.1. Severe and very serious psychological violence	18.6	.268	.008
5. Threats to harm the victim	59.4	.451	.017
5.1. Severe threats to harm the victim	24.6	.440	.007
5.3. Death threat	30.7	.380	.003
6. Aggression escalation	40.1	.306	.017
7. Offender shows exaggerated jealousy or suspected infidelity	35.9	.372	.010
8. Offender shows controlling behaviors	38.3	.430	.019
9. Offender shows stalking behavior	25.5	.360	.013
15. Presence of a criminal record	42.1	.044	.551
16. Presence of past breaks of sentence conditions	3.7	.021	.328
17. Presence of physical or sexual aggression records	13.7	.040	.520
18. Presence of gender-based violence records against other female intimate partners	13.2	.035	.539
% Variance account for (VAF) component	−	26.236	16.933

Table 3. *Three, four and eight cluster models using two dimension indexes*

IPVAW typology	Inestability Dimension Index		Antisociality Dimension Index	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
LiLa (*n* = 3,949; 40.6%)	.101	.104	.063	.108
HiLa (*n* = 2,967; 30.5%)	.599	.194	.025	.075
HiHa (*n* = 2,815; 28.9%)	.408	.266	.514	.209
LiLa (*n* = 3,949; 40.6%)	.101	.104	.063	.108
HiLa (*n* = 2,674; 27.5%)	.572	.183	.000	.000
HiHa (*n* = 2,083; 21.4%)	.608	.193	.427	.210
LiHa (*n* = 1,025; 10.5%)	.127	.124	.615	.159
LiLa (*n* = 2,962; 30.4%)	.000	.000	.097	.103
HiLa (*n* = 928; 9.5%)	.592	.145	.103	.104
HiHa (*n* = 427; 4.4%)	.824	.114	.624	.212
LiHa (*n* = 1,207; 12.4%)	.000	.000	.742	.128
LiMa (*n* = 1,467; 15.1%)	.000	.000	.432	.062
MiLa (*n* = 987; 10.1%)	.250	.000	.110	.107
MiMa (*n* = 914; 9.4%)	.352	.123	.434	.062
MiHa (*n* = 839; 8.6%)	.355	.124	.759	.130

Note. *SD* = standard deviation.

Table 4. *Severity of the reported IPVAW episode (Factor 1)*

VPR Risk Indicators[a]		IPVAW typology				$\chi2$	Cramer's V
		LiLa ($n = 3,949$; 40.6%)	HiLa ($n = 2,674$; 27.5%)	HiHa ($n = 2,083$; 21.4%)	LiHa ($n = 1,025$; 10.5%)		
1. Psychological violence	Presence	2,343 (59.3%)	2,270 (84.9%)	1,844 (88.5%)	611 (59.6%)	905.82***	.305
	CSR	-24.3	16.7	18.4	-9.9		
1.1. Severe and very serious psychological violence	Presence	150 (3.8%)	875 (32.7%)	740 (35.5%)	44 (4.3%)	1,456.99***	.387
	CSR	-31	22.1	22.4	-12.4		
2. Physical violence	Presence	2,673 (67.7%)	1,625 (60.8%)	1,461 (70.1%)	771 (75.2%)	88.48***	.095
	CSR	1	-8.2	3.3	5.8		
2.1. Severe and very serious physical violence	Presence	163 (4.1%)	299 (11.2%)	307 (14.7%)	64 (6.2%)	231.20***	.154
	CSR	-12.9	5.7	11.4	-2.8		
3. Sexual violence	Presence	107 (2.7%)	221 (8.3%)	171 (8.2%)	39 (3.8%)	132.90***	.117
	CSR	-10.1	7.3	6	-2.6		
4. Use of weapons against the victim	Presence	192 (4.9%)	335 (12.5%)	350 (16.8%)	76 (7.4%)	253.75***	.161
	CSR	-13.5	5.6	12.1	-2.7		
4.1. Use of a cutting weapon	Presence	53 (1.3%)	145 (5.4%)	148 (7.1%)	21 (2.0%)	156.47***	.127
	CSR	-10.4	5.3	9	-3.1		
4.2. Use of a firearm	Presence	2 (.05%)	3 (.1%)	7 (.3%)	2 (.2%)	–	–
	CSR	-2	-0.5	2.6	0.5		
4.3. Use of a blunt object	Presence	136 (3.4%)	179 (6.7%)	182 (8.7%)	52 (5.1%)	79.51***	.090
	CSR	-7.8	2.8	6.9	-0.8		
5. Threats to harm the victim	Presence	1,176 (12.1%)	2,380 (89.0%)	1,884 (90.4%)	344 (33.6%)	3,525.85***	.602
	CSR	-49.2	36.6	32.5	-17.8		
5.1. Severe threats to harm the victim	Presence	36 (29.8%)	1,233 (46.1%)	1,092 (52.4%)	30 (2.9%)	2,993.12***	.555
	CSR	-44.8	30.4	33.3	-17		
5.2. Suicide threats from the aggressor	Presence	89 (2.3%)	346 (12.9%)	233 (11.2%)	24 (2.3%)	366.22***	.194
	CSR	-15.4	13.8	8.2	-6.3		
5.3. Death threat	Presence	232 (5.9%)	1,400 (52.4%)	1,255 (60.2%)	97 (9.5%)	2,807.35***	.537
	CSR	-43.8	28.6	33	-15.6		
6. Aggression escalation	Presence	648 (16.4%)	1,701 (63.6%)	1,367 (65.6%)	186 (18.1%)	2,308.94***	.487
	CSR	-39.4	29.1	26.8	-15.2		

Note. *CSR* = corrected standardized residuals. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. [a] Risk indicators used to create the typology were italicized.

Table 5. *Risk indicators related to the aggressor (Factor 2)*

VPR Risk Indicators[a]		IPVAW typology				χ2	Cramer's *V*
		LiLa (n = 3,949; 40.58%)	HiLa (n = 2,674; 27.48%)	HiHa (n = 2,083; 21.41%)	LiHa (n = 1,025; 10.53%)		
7. Exaggerated jealousy or suspicion of infidelity	Presence	393 (10.0%)	1,615 (60.4%)	1,350 (64.8%)	139 (13.6%)	2,830.29***	.539
	CSR	-44.1	31	31	-15.8		
8. Controlling behavior	Presence	380 (9.6%)	1,795 (67.1%)	1,407 (67.5%)	142 (13.9%)	3,328.88***	.585
	CSR	-48	36.1	31	-17		
9. Stalking behavior	Presence	164 (4.2%)	1,235 (46.2%)	1,030 (49.4%)	57 (5.6%)	2,389.94***	.496
	CSR	-40	28.7	28.2	-15.5		
10. Life problems (stress)	Presence	592 (15.0%)	751 (28.1%)	817 (39.2%)	209 (20.4%)	466.93***	.219
	CSR	-17.8	5.3	17.8	-3.1		
10.1. Economic or work-related problems	Presence	335 (8.5%)	457 (17.1%)	475 (22.8%)	112 (10.9%)	260.27***	.164
	CSR	-13.3	5.1	12.7	-3.1		
10.2. Legal problems	Presence	57 (1.4%)	32 (1.2%)	226 (10.8%)	56 (5.5%)	399.24***	.203
	CSR	-10.1	-8.3	18.9	2.9		
11. Material damage	Presence	726 (18.4%)	919 (34.4%)	858 (41.2%)	191 (18.6%)	461.99***	.218
	CSR	-16.9	9.1	15.5	-6.8		
12. Disrespect toward an authority figure	Presence	146 (3.7%)	149 (5.6%)	335 (16.1%)	124 (12.1%)	337.29***	.186
	CSR	-12.4	-4.9	16	5.5		
13. Aggression against third parties or animals	Presence	181 (4.6%)	283 (10.6%)	391 (18.8%)	147 (14.3%)	319.89***	.181
	CSR	-15.3	0.6	14.4	4.5		
14. Threats and slights toward third parties	Presence	361 (9.1%)	631 (23.6%)	718 (34.5%)	171 (16.7%)	604.89***	.249
	CSR	-21	6.6	19.7	-2.3		
15. Criminal records	Presence	987 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2,082 (100.0%)	1025 (100.0%)	6,689.27***	.829
	CSR	-28.2	-51.7	60.4	39.7		
16. Break of sentence conditions	Presence	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	178 (8.5%)	184 (18.0%)	970.89***	.316
	CSR	-16	-11.9	13.1	25.5		
17. Physical or sexual aggression records	Presence	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	677 (32.5%)	658 (64.2%)	3,880.13***	.631
	CSR	-32.5	-24.2	28.1	49.7		
18. Records of gender-based violence against other intimate partners	Presence	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	624 (30.0%)	656 (64.0%)	3,837.68***	.628
	CSR	-31.7	-23.6	25.6	50.9		
19. Mental or psychiatric disorder	Presence	125 (3.2%)	172 (6.4%)	169 (8.1%)	52 (5.1%)	75.31***	.088
	CSR	-7.8	3	6.4	-0.4		
20. Suicidal ideas or attempts	Presence	180 (4.6%)	429 (16.0%)	333 (16.0%)	44 (4.3%)	354.14***	.191
	CSR	-15.1	11.9	10	-6.6		
21. Substance abuse	Presence	1,096 (27.8%)	1,004 (37.5%)	1,226 (58.9%)	407 (39.7%)	559.52***	.240
	CSR	-17.8	-1	21.7	0.9		
22. Childhood victimization within the family	Presence	161 (4.1%)	277 (10.4%)	336 (16.1%)	117 (11.4%)	255.23***	.162
	CSR	-14.4	2.5	12.4	2.7		
23. Perpetrator younger than 24 years old	Presence	421 (10.7%)	312 (11.7%)	235 (11.3%)	111 (10.8%)	1.79	−
	CSR	-1.1	1.1	0.3	-0.3		

Note. *CSR* = corrected standardized residuals. * *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; *** *p* < .001. [a] Risk indicators used to create the typology were italicized.

Table 6. *Victim vulnerability (Factor 3), indicators related to children (Factor 4) and aggravating circumstances (Factor 5)*

VPR Risk Indicators		IPVAW typology				χ^2	Cramer's V
		LiLa ($n = 3,949$; 40.58%)	HiLa ($n = 2,674$; 27.48%)	HiHa ($n = 2,083$; 21.41%)	LiHa ($n = 1,025$; 10.53%)		
Factor 3							
24. Mental or psychiatric disorder, severe illness, and/or any kind of disability	Presence	236 (6.0%)	220 (8.2%)	166 (8.0%)	69 (6.7%)	15.31**	.040
	CSR	-3.6	2.7	1.7	-0.5		
25. Suicidal ideas or attempts	Presence	93 (2.4%)	141 (5.3%)	118 (5.7%)	25 (2.4%)	62.13***	.080
	CSR	-6.4	4.4	4.8	-2.5		
26. Substance abuse	Presence	133 (3.4%)	40 (1.5%)	77 (3.7%)	65 (6.3%)	59.04***	.078
	CSR	0.6	-6	1.3	5.9		
27. Lack of social support	Presence	436 (11.0%)	412 (15.4%)	350 (16.8%)	146 (14.2%)	47.01***	.070
	CSR	-6.5	2.8	4.5	0.4		
28. Foreign origin	Presence	1,054 (26.7%)	594 (22.2%)	419 (20.1%)	248 (24.2%)	37.59***	.062
	CSR	5.6	-2.2	-4.4	0.3		
Factor 4							
29. The victim has minors in her care	Presence	1,853 (46.9%)	1,552 (58.0%)	1,172 (56.3%)	440 (42.9%)	128,00***	.115
	CSR	-7.6	7.9	4.8	-5.8		
30. The aggressor threats to harm children	Presence	335 (8.5%)	518 (19.4%)	346 (16.6%)	89 (8.7%)	204.49***	.145
	CSR	-11.4	11	5.1	-4.5		
31. The victim fears that minors will be attacked	Presence	448 (11.3%)	733 (27.4%)	616 (29.6%)	124 (12.1%)	439.91***	.213
	CSR	-17.2	11.7	12.7	-6.5		
Factor 5							
32. The victim has reported other offenders in the past	Presence	438 (11.1%)	234 (8.8%)	386 (18.5%)	249 (24.3%)	219.55***	.150
	CSR	-5.6	-8.3	7.7	10.8		
33. Bidirectional violence	Presence	500 (12.7%)	316 (11.8%)	285 (13.7%)	148 (14.4%)	6.27	–
	CSR	-0.4	-1.8	1.3	1.6		
34. The victim has communicated to the aggressor her desire to end the relationship	Presence	1,440 (36.5%)	1,812 (67.8%)	1,392 (66.8%)	345 (33.7%)	966.64***	.315
	CSR	-24.1	20	16	-11.9		
35. The victim thinks that the aggressor may kill her	Presence	546 (13.8%)	1,201 (44.9%)	1,155 (55.4%)	196 (19.1%)	1,412.53***	.381
	CSR	-31.5	17	26.1	-9.2		

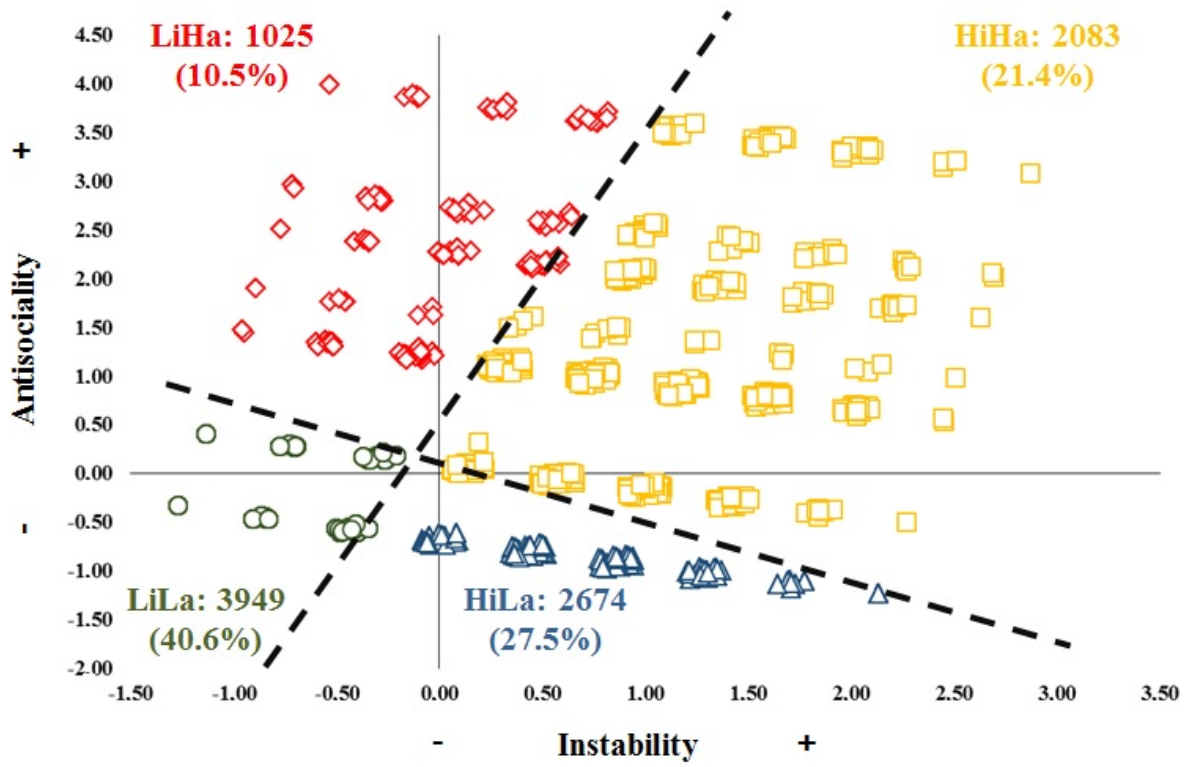Note. *CSR* = corrected standardized residuals. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Figure 1. Four-group solution distributed along instability and antisociality dimensions