



FAMILY HONOUR AS THE CENTRAL INSTITUTION IN DIFFERENT SOCIETIES AND A PERSON'S SOCIAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This article is about family honour in different countries and people's social identity, Masculine honor has been found to explain the relationship between insults and aggression in the USA. However, detailed accounts of Mediterranean honor cultures suggest that family honor may be more important in explaining cross-cultural differences in aggression. Two studies revealed that people from Turkish honor culture intended to aggress more after being insulted than Dutch people from a nonhonor culture, and that this effect was driven by differences in family honor rather than differences in masculine honor. We posit that family honor may be a key factor in explaining insult-related aggression in Mediterranean honor cultures.

Introduction: "Honor is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society" Honor codes have been subdivided into four different types of honor concerns; family honor, masculine honor, feminine honor, and social interdependence paper we will focus only on family honor and masculine honor. Family honor refers to a concern for the reputation of one's family, whereas masculine honor refers to a concern for being able to live up to the standards set for males (e.g., being tough, able to take care of one's family, produce offspring).

Honor cultures exist throughout the world but are more common among peoples from regions stretching from North Africa via the Middle East, Central Asia and to the

Indian subcontinent. Examples of these countries are Afghanistan, Albania, Eritrea, Iraq, Kurdistan, Libya, Palestine, Pakistan and Somalia.

Honor is not a sentiment in itself, but is closely linked to emotions, such as anger, shame, and pride. Having honor is usually associated with pride, whereas losing one's honor or dishonor is usually associated with shame and anger. It has been shown that the adherence to honor norms can affect emotional reactions. For instance, people with a strong concern for honor react with more anger after being insulted than people with a weak concern for honor.

Studies on Turkish honor culture are scarce, focusing mainly on honor killings, ethnographic reports or sociological



analyses. Statistics on violence, though, are clear, showing that Turkey ranks in the top three of countries with the highest homicide rates and violent crimes in the European Union and its aspiring members. Thus, Turks deal with relatively high rates of physical violence in everyday life Western European countries that have Turkish minority groups (such as the Netherlands) struggle with honor-related violence. Although these findings suggest that an honor culture may be prevalent in Turkish communities, very little is known on the relationship between insults and aggression. It has been shown in high honor groups (Turkish Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch) motivated verbal in his own disapproval after the experience of shame society.

While the concept of honor in the Arab world encompasses many different forms and situations, the sexual conduct of women is a domain sharply differentiated from all other areas of the honor-shame syndrome. Most killings or attempted murders are, directly or indirectly, the result of an alleged "insult" to a woman. Speaking of shame is more prevalent in Arab daily discourse than mentioning honor – that is, it is shame rather than honor that is the predominant concern. The Bedouin of the Negev and Sinai use the term for problems ostensibly tied to women's honor, which, in fact, needs to be understood as a man's honor vis-à-vis his woman. From a psychosocial perspective, connotes shame for which there is no justification. A man refers to a wife and daughters who are under his responsibility as literally, "they are my honor". The Bedouin term is pronounced in classical

Historically, honor has been closely connected to the institution of marriage. Women's honor corresponded to men's lineage rights, because the ultimate violation of *irdh* took place if a woman, unmarried or married, gave birth to an illegitimate child. Yet since a man's honor required legitimate male offspring to carry on his lineage, a wife's infertility could provide a man with an argument for taking a second wife, since polygamy is sanctioned by Islam, and outlawed in the early twenty-first century only in the Muslim countries of Tunisia and Turkey. Many groups continue to believe that family honor is maintained through endogamous marriages, often of cousins. While this tendency may be subsiding in larger cosmopolitan centers, men in Bedouin society are frequently required to marry relatives whether or not they form a romantic attachment with them, and this also provides a rationale for polygamy.

Beyond marriage, many customs in the Middle East have developed to display or protect honor. Various articles of dress, which varied tremendously by geographic area, group, and sub-climate, often identified membership in a particular tribe, or occupation, and thus demonstrated the honor of that group—for example, the urban notables or wealthy town dwellers of Moroccan cities. The custom of female as well as male circumcision was also related to the notion of honor. Male circumcision was and is practiced by Jews and Muslims in the region, but is not thought by most scholars to affect male sexual functions. Female circumcision, however, which involves removal, or partial removal, of the clitoris and sometimes the labia, as well as infibulation, and is found in North and



Western Africa, the Nile valley, and among the Bedouin of the Sinai peninsula and the Negev, is clearly related to sexual honor. The custom predates the monotheistic religions, but is now considered by some to be "Islamic" and a marker of cultural purity and family honor since it may render girls less susceptible to sexual stimulation. Families still believe the custom to confer honor and purity on girls and that, if uncircumcised, they will be unwanted as marriage partners.

Notions of honor have affected literary conventions, and also religious and political ideas. In classic Islamic literature, women's honor was seen to be protected when references to the beloved were made with the masculine verbal forms and pronouns in Arabic. The notion of courtly love, *hubb'udhri*, manifested ideals of honor, for this love was unrequited, indeed often undeclared, and so brought no shame upon the beloved. This ideal encircled the Mediterranean and was not restricted to Muslim countries. Presidents of modern countries are accorded a large degree of pomp and circumstance, and in the Middle East this is culturally expressed in terms of their honorable status and not Iranian women, Tehran, 1979. Many Islamic women wear garments that conceal most of their body to show their piety and to uphold their honor. The Arabic concept of *irdh*, which addresses the acceptable behavior of women, disavows women who are not virgins at marriage or who are unfaithful. Merely the fact of their political power. Similarly, the elite politicians of many Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries have held open houses, through which they have both claimed honor and

granted political favors to their supporters. Honor has proved problematic for certain marginal elements in society. The honor of professional entertainers in Muslim and Mediterranean society has often been questioned; for females, because their bodies or voices were displayed in public; and for males, because their patrons might expect to dictate their choice of performance. Thus superior entertainers would uphold "honor" by demonstrating adherence to their own aesthetics and choice of repertoire. Historically, and in the modern era, honor is also claimed by the rulers and ruling classes. In some cases, the noble or honorable lineage of particular rulers, such as the Hashemites of Jordan, or the rulers of Morocco, is attributed to their historical derivations and descent from the Prophet, and for the Hashemites as the former administrators of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Many of Shakespeare's works examine the duty children and younger generations within a family owe their parents, or the older generation—in *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, for example, Shakespeare interrogates filial duty, familial honor, and the difficulties of seeing a parent's will through. In *Romeo and Juliet*, however, Shakespeare turns this interrogation on its head. While a child's honor-bound duty to his or her parent is complex, to say the least, in the world of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, in *Romeo and Juliet*, it is portrayed outrightly as an absurd, punitive, and even cruel demand. *Romeo and Juliet* are bound to honor their families' hatred of one another—when each learns who the other is after falling in love at a party at the Capulets' home, they are crestfallen to realize that they are



enemies by default. Of course, Romeo and Juliet are not, as individuals, each other's enemies—but the codes of honor their parents have thrust upon them demand that they hate one another simply out of duty. As Romeo and Juliet secretly conspire to shirk that duty, surrender to their love for each other, and marry in great haste, Shakespeare points out the ridiculousness of feuds and grudges like the one between

the Capulets and Montagues—ancient resentments whose root cause no one alive can even remember. Shakespeare shows that it is the very fact that Romeo and Juliet's love is forbidden which spurs their passion—as young teenagers, they long to get in trouble and defy their families, and marrying one another is the ultimate transgression against their parents' wills.

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