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Does the Culture of Honor do well in Poland?

A Replication Study on the Culture of Honor while Accounting For Gender Role Differences¹

Abstract

This paper deals with the issue of honor culture in Poland. In a traditional honor culture, honorable men should be sensitive to situations where their honor is defiled. They should also be ready to defend their good name (Cohen and Nisbett, 1997), even if it means using violence. In such a culture women cannot actively defend their honor. The authors checked the gender role differences (both in actor and observer perspective) in attitudes towards honorable behaviors.

The paper presents two experiments, analyzed with repeated ANOVA measures. In the first study, which is a replication of the research conducted by Szmajke (1999), men and women (N = 156) evaluated a letter written by an “honorable” killer and a “dishonorable” thief (in two gender versions). The second study (N = 146) replicated the results of the first one. The results confirm the traditional concept of the culture of honor as a permission for aggression used by men to defend their good name, in the eyes of both women and men. The use of violence by women in an analogous situation is evaluated negatively by both genders. Results show that the general gender roles in Polish culture of honor keeps men as active user of violence to respond for the provocation. Women are not allowed to active violent defend of their honor.

Keywords: culture of honor, aggression, gender roles, impression formation, experiment.

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By a person who is capable of demanding and offering honorary satisfaction, or in short, a “gentleman”, we mean these males (excluding clergymen) who due to their education, personal intelligence, social position, or birth are above the level of an ordinary decent person. Note: The term mentioned above eliminates women from the power of the valid honorary code, thus reflecting its medieval origin and meeting the French rule which specifies a woman as “impropre au duel”

Boziewicz, W. (1919/1990) *Polski Kodeks Honorowy (Polish Code of Honor)*

Introduction

If a man provokes another man in a public situation and the provoked one does not respond to it, he will act against honor culture. His response, depending on culture, may be violence, humor or withdrawal (Krys et al., 2017). Polish honor culture traditionally allows an aggressive, honorary response only to men (Boziewicz, 1919/1990). Yet it seems that image of a strong and honorable man who defends and takes care of a weak woman may be outdated. In the present paper we would like to find out how much the traditional male honor culture is reflected in contemporary Poland.

The ability to be aggressive under unsafe conditions is a measure of a man's strength and toughness. The fame of being hard and tough while defending one's family and property has the potential to psychologically drive away possible aggressors. This feature of aggression has been specified as the culture of honor (Nisbett, Cohen, 1996). Being perceived as a “tough guy” in honor cultures scares off and protects against possible attacks by potential attackers. While building their reputation, men living in the West of the US had to engage in situations in which they responded aggressively to provocations. This is how they built their social position of being ready to a strong response and, thus, were models to other people. Such a defense mechanism, through the image of the “capability of being aggressive”, makes sense in a community where law and legal authorities do not take enough care of their people. In a situation in which people are duly taken care of, building one's reputation through violence is not necessary.

Szmajke, Bąk and Adamus (2004, p. 7) define culture of honor as:

A permissive attitude towards using violence and aggression if undertaken to defend oneself, one's relatives, or property even if the threat is of a symbolic nature (e.g. a verbal insult or other violation). Moreover, not only do honor cultures condone using violence, but also even oblige men to use it under the pain of losing their social reputation (“honor”).

However, the notion of “culture of honor,” which is associated with the possibility of losing one’s face in the eyes of others, should be distinguished from the notion of “dignity”. Dignity is related to the internal world of values (Szmajke, 1999; Cohen and Nisbett, 1997). In honor culture a man is obliged to respond to an insult. If he does not challenge the insulting party to a duel or shows submissiveness, he will result in his losing his honor in the eyes of others.

Honor culture is not a social norm in every community. Shackelford (2006) lists the following factors facilitating the occurrence of honor culture. The first is the failure of the State to protect and watch over maintaining social norms. The second factor is an ease of divesting resources belonging to a man by another man, which makes using violence while building one’s reputation as an “off-scarer” reasonable. Szmajke (2004) also mentions the following: law and legal authorities (e.g. police) being questioned, parenting style supporting honor culture, media supporting the honorable nature of aggression, suppressing emotions while being provoked until a blow-up, collectivist culture in which one’s image in the eyes of community is of bigger importance. On the other hand, when the law is respected, people feel safe. If, additionally, resources cannot be taken away that easily and there are no other factors fostering aggression, the honor culture can theoretically fade out or disappear.

The question is to what extent Poland still represents such culture of honor. As Boski (2010) notes, Poland with its history of nobleness might resemble the western part of the US when it comes to permission for honorable violence. However, a recent survey conducted by CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center; Kowalczyk, 2015) suggests that Poles feel ever safer. In 2015, 68% of respondents believed that Poland is a safe country, and only 28% took the opposite view. According to this survey, until about 1997, the percentage of interviewees who felt safe was lower than of those who felt endangered, which could be associated with the prevalence of honor culture norms both in so called “culture of honor enclaves” (see Szmajke, 1999) and outside them. If one of the key stimuli of honor culture – the sense of threat – has changed so dramatically, it may be possible that people also gave up the scripts of the culture of honor? Another issue that may reduce the potential of the existence of the traditionally understood honor culture is the peculiar crisis of the male role as a strong and determined “macho” (Zimbardo and Coulombe, 2015).

Women in honor culture

The evolutionary role of a woman in the classical description of honor culture amounts to maintaining and awarding the honorable aggression of men (Shackelford, 2006). From the evolutionary perspective, a woman should not get involved in duels as it might result in making her children orphans. In psychological literature, the role of a woman in honor culture amounts to a socializing intergenerational transmission of principles of building and protecting one's reputation by males (Szmajke, 2004; Cohen et al., 1998). Having a mother from the culture of honor much more significantly shapes one's attitude to aggression than having the father from this culture. According to researchers (Cohen et al., 1998), females are an educational link in passing on models of honorable behavior. Women enhance a sense of obligation to respond to insult in males (their sons or partners), even if the response is too aggressive and redundant.

Nisbett and Cohen (1996) signalize the possibility of an active role of women from honor cultures. They show that women from the south of the US (in comparison to the women from the north) commit murder more often (especially when associated with alcohol-related fights). They are also more willing to accept an aggressive response to insults, or corporal punishment of children. Despite the exclusion of women from taking part in duels in the Polish tradition (by lack of the so called *honor ability*), they were neither deprived of honor nor of the obligation of taking care of it (Wiszwaty, 2009, p. 16). Honor ability is a male attribute and means standing up on one's own for honor of oneself or somebody else, e.g. by challenging or being challenged to a duel. However, a woman had the right to expect from her male relatives (brother, father, husband) that they would stand up to defend her honor.

Nevertheless, today the traditional understanding of gender roles is modified by culture more frequently. Women freely choose roles once restricted for males only (a policeman, a fire fighter, a minister). On the other hand, men choose roles traditionally considered as female (running a household, childcare, nursing). Many women decide not to get involved in a relationship, or simply to remain single, or not engage in another relationship after a split-up. In light of the above, the revision of Cohen and Nisbett's theory (1996) presenting women only as "intergenerational transmitters of honor culture" seems interesting. This role would be limited only to maintaining the image of their men as adamant and hot-tempered, and passing on similar values to their sons. But what if there are no men of this type? Or maybe these values have declined in importance?

An alternative operationalization of honor culture assumes that honor can be subdivided into e.g. family honor, moral integrity, male honor, and female honor (Guerra et al., 2013). Perhaps, in such a perspective men still can play the role of strong and deterring defenders. But women might have other ways to take care of their own honor and to defend it. This interesting question asks whether honor culture is one- or multi-dimensional. Is it possible that honor culture is associated with male culture due to the fact that aggression is easily noticeable in males? The female conceptualization of honor might be more difficult to capture, especially at the level of official statistics. In their operationalization of female honor Guerrera et al. (2013) present some of its norms, though they do not relate directly to aggressive behaviors. This revision of the honor culture concept could indicate the need for a revision of the active defending of honor as a purely male responsibility. At the same time, however, looking to family values would be more honorable to women (than to men), no matter the type of activities taken up to do so. Thereby, some behaviors considered dishonorable for males (like theft) might be seen as honorable in the case of females if performed for the benefit of the family.

Research questions and hypotheses

The most important question of this research is the role of women in honor culture. As we did not find any research data about the role of modern women in the situation of violence used by her to defend her good name, we propose two possible directions of the relationship. First, as Cohen and Nisbett (1996) suggest, women can just be transmitters of honor culture, which might be determined by evolution (Shackelford, 2006). This would mean acceptance of the honorable behaviors of men and the lack of acceptance of similar behaviors of female actors in the eyes of female observers. However, if attitudes towards honorable behaviors are only conditioned culturally (and not evolutionary), present cultural patterns will condition the reverse judgment of honorable and dishonorable behaviors. This would mean a higher evaluation of dishonorable and non-aggressive behaviors of males and females by women, and a lower evaluation of behaviors that are honorable and aggressive. These assumptions take the form of the following hypotheses: (H1) Women's assessment of honorable women's behaviors will be less negative in comparison to dishonorable women's behaviors. (H2) Women's assessment of honorable men's behaviors will be less negative in comparison to dishonorable men's behaviors. (H3) Men's assessment of honorable women will be less negative in

comparison to dishonorable women. (H4) Men's assessment of honorable men will be less negative in comparison to dishonorable men.

Possible acceptance of the first and third hypotheses would mean that women have taken the status of "honor culture executors". Accepting the second hypothesis confirms transferring honor culture by women in the traditional version. The fourth hypothesis confirms the occurring honor culture in males.

Study 1

Analyses were aimed at testing whether intersexual differences exist between the assessment of perpetrators of honorable murder compared to a dishonorable situation – a theft – by women and men. The applied procedure consisted in the assessment of letters (see Appendix) written by two persons, which was a replication of Szmajke's (2004) studies but with the reversal of roles. In the original study the authors of the two letters, assessed by the subjects, were males, one of whom killed another man in defense of his own reputation and the other one stole something under justified circumstances. In our experiment the same acts were executed by females, too.

Subjects

A total of 156 subjects were examined, including 110 women and 46 men. The subjects were students of different Polish universities, aged on average 23.72 (SD = 6.31). The subjects lived mostly in the Opole province (N = 61), Silesian province (N = 30), Lower Silesian province (N = 21), Łódź province (N = 20) and others (N = 24).

Research procedure

The subjects were invited to the study through the internet. After answering the demographic questions a person was randomly assigned to one of the two versions of the study differing by the sex of the assessed person. In the study, the respondent was asked to read letters of two people (they assessed the person described in the first letter and only then did they read the other letter). During the study the researchers used original letters used previously (Szmajke, Bąk & Adamus, 2004) which presented a honorable murder and dishonorable theft performed by males, and modified letters in which the perpetrators were women.

Variables and their measurement

The dependent variable, just as in original study (Szmajke, Bąk & Adamus, 2004), was assessment of the male or female author of each of the letter on 5 dimensions (understanding, justification, sympathy, condemnation, liking) operationalized as a seven-stage semantic differential. To simplify the presentation of results, the negative attitude factor was calculated as the average of negative scales (lack of understanding, condemnation) and reversed positive scales (liking, sympathy, justification). Cronbach's alpha for a factor constructed this way was from $\alpha = 0.70$ to $\alpha = 0.75$, which is enough for the research objectives. The independent variables in the research were: 1) the repeated measures factor (assessment of the letter describing the honorable murder versus dishonorable theft); 2) research group (a man's letter vs. the woman's letter); 3) sex of the subject.

Additionally, an effect on the dependent variables of the following factors were controlled: 1) belief in stereotypically female or male roles factor (measured with IPP inventory; Kuczyńska, 1992). Instead of the standard instruction, we asked the subjects to judge the features of a *stereotypical man* and a *stereotypical woman*. The subjects assessed the characteristics using adjectives provided in the IPP inventory. We took the degree of compliance of these assessments with characteristics of male men and female women as an indicator of belief in gender stereotypes; 2) Social Approval, as a control variable (KAS, Drwal and Wilczyńska, 1995); 3) threat scale, as a control variable (the authors' own tool). The threat scale is a short tool developed for the purpose of the study. It examines the degree of the sensed anxiety related to one's own safety. The subjects respond to 5 statements on a 1-7 scale, where 1 denotes a lack of agreement and 7 strong agreement. The average result for this scale was 18.47 (Sd = 7.99). The scale has a good internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.86$). The specific data is presented in table 1 (on the next page).

Results

As the study used a number of inventories to measure variables, there was a risk of a common method bias. To get control over this bias, the authors started with exploratory ANOVA for all research variables. A single-factor method explained 11.95% of the variance, KMO = 0.73. According to the Harman's single-factor test criterion (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012), the obtained results suggest that the data is not affected by the common method bias. Next, analysis for the negative attitude factor mentioned above was conducted. The

Table 1.

Questions	Position-Scale Pearsons' correlation coef.	M	SD
I am afraid to go out of home after dark (PL: Boję się wychodzić z domu po zmroku)	0.76	3.40	2.08
I do not like to walk the dark streets (PL: Nie lubię chodzić ciemnymi ulicami)	0.73	4.42	2.10
I am afraid of some places in my neighborhood (PL: Boję się pewnych rejonów w mojej okolicy)	0.74	3.91	2.04
I am worrying that someone might threaten my person (PL: Zamartwiam się tym, że ktoś może zagrażać mojej osobie)	0.55	3.45	1.95
I'm anxious that I might be robbed (PL: Obawiam się, że ktoś może mnie okraść)	0.63	3.25	1.73

Table 1. Threat scale – parameters of the individual test items

analyses were conducted in the MANCOVA 2 model (sex of the author of the letter: female vs. male) \times 2 (offense: honorable-murder vs. dishonorable theft – intra-individual comparison) \times 2 (sex of the subjects: females vs. males). The covariants in this model were: 1) belief in stereotypically female ($\alpha = 0.89$; $F = 0.91$; $p = n.s.$) and stereotypically male gender roles factor ($\alpha = 0.88$; $F = 0.90$; $p = n.s.$), 2) Social Approval (KAS, Drwal, Wilczyńska, 1990; $F = 0.37$; $p = n.s.$), 3) threat scale ($F = 0.029$; $p = n.s.$). The effect of the controlled variables in the covariant model was statistically insignificant. The graph of these relationships is presented in fig. 1.

To sum up, the first hypothesis was rejected – women do not assess the honorable behavior of another woman better (in comparison with dishonorable behavior) which is shown in figure 1 and table 2 (on page 116). The second hypothesis, though, which assumed that women would assess an honorable behavior of men less negatively, was confirmed. Thus these results support the primary hypotheses saying that women are “honor culture transmitters” not “executors”. The third hypothesis was rejected; men do not differentiate between an honorable and dishonorable women’s attitude that was presented in the letters. However, the fourth hypothesis was confirmed assuming that men would be more likely to accept the honorable behavior of other men as compared to dishonorable behavior.

Figure 1.

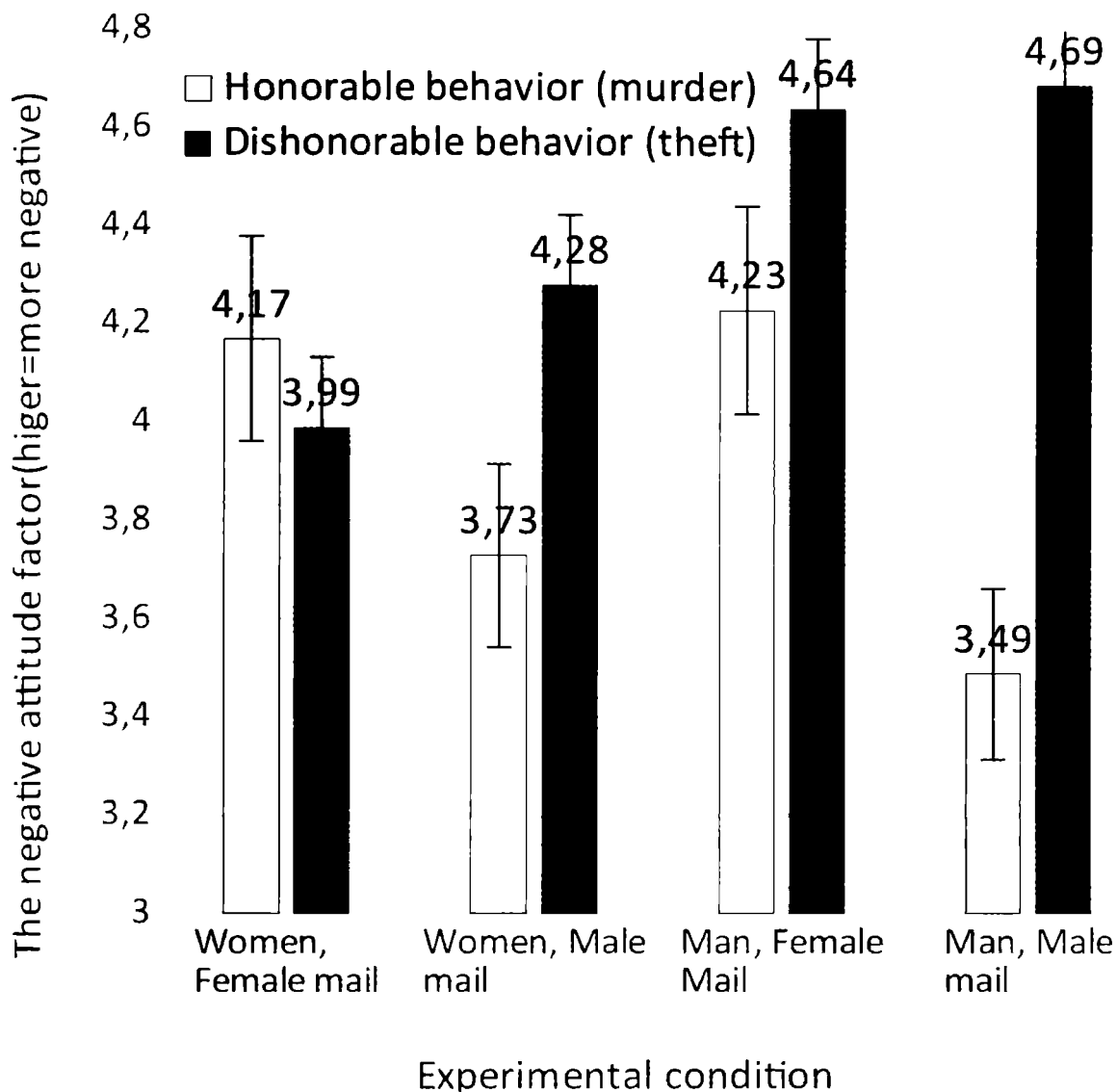


Figure 1. Average results on the negativity scale, depending on the experimental condition. The 95% confidence intervals show the statistically significant differences between experimental groups.

Study 2

The study is a replication of the first study. We were trying to find if the replication will give the same results.

Subjects

There were 146 subjects in the study, and 103 of them were women. The average age of the subjects was 24 years old (SD = 8.11). The subjects were students of Polish

Table 2.

Negative attitude factor					Contrast analysis
Gender of the evaluator: man	Honorable behavior		Dishonorable behavior		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male mail	3.50	1.34	4.70	1.43	
Female mail	4.23	1.21	4,64	1.25	1.43
Negative attitude factor					Contrast analysis
Gender of the evaluator: women	Honorable behavior		Dishonorable behavior		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male mail	3.73	1.23	4.28	1.44	7.98*
Female mail	4,71	1.24	3.99	1.58	0.74

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.001$

Table 2. Descriptive statistics with a contrast analysis testing the differences between honorable and dishonorable letter evaluation.

universities and were invited to the study via an advertisement published on the Institute of Psychology website. The subjects lived mostly in the Opole province (N = 65), Silesian province (N = 31), Lower Silesian province (N = 22), Łódź province (N = 20) and others (N = 8). Sample were very common to the first research.

Procedure and Tools

After answering the demographic questions a person was randomly assigned to one of the two versions of the study as in study 1. In the study, the respondent was asked to read the letters of two people (they assessed the person described in the first letter and only then did they read the other letter.) The letters from the previous study were used in this study.

The first letter from a “male/female murderer” was identical as in the first study. However, a different operationalization was used in the case of dishonorable behavior, which was a modification of the letter used by Szmajke, 2004 (modified respectively according to the author’s sex, which was clearly indicated due to the Polish language rules): *There is one thing I would like to explain to you, as I’d like to be honest with you and avoid confusion. Some time ago I came back from abroad where*

I was doing things I'm not proud of. In short, I did what an honorable man/woman would never do.

Variables

Similarly to the first study, the major dependent variable was the negative attitude factor towards the dishonorable and honorable mail (intra-individual comparison). The independent variables were: the sex of the subject, and the sex of the author of the letter. Controlled: belief in stereotypically female or male gender roles factor (based on IPP, Kuczyńska, 1992), Social Approval (KAS, Drwal and Wilczyńska, 1995), threat scale (the authors' own tool).

Results

To simplify the results, a general negative attitude factor was calculated, similarly to study 1. Repeated ANOVA measures were performed where intergroup factors were the subject's sex (2) and sex of the person assessed in the letter ($\times 2$), while the intragroup factor was an honorable or dishonorable attitude presented in the letter ($\times 2$).

In this model covariants were statistically insignificant. Statistics values for the controlled variables were as follows:

- belief in the stereotypically female gender role factor ($F = 0.26$; $p = \text{n.s.}$);
- belief in the stereotypically male gender role ($F = 3.42$; $p < 0.07$);
- Social Approval (KAS, Drwal, 1990; $F = 1.37$ $p = \text{n.s.}$);
- threat scale ($F = 0.30$ $p = \text{n.s.}$).

Applicable analyses revealed a statistically significant effect of honorability of the attitude ($F [1,152] = 13.93$; $p < 0.001$ $\eta^2 = 0.08$), and of honorability-sex interaction ($F [1,152] = 5.48$); $p < 0.05$ $\eta^2 = 0.03$) as well as honorability-letter version interaction ($F [1,152] = 8.20$; $p < 0.05$ $\eta^2 = 0.05$).

As shown on the graph, the least negative is a man's honorable behavior compared to a dishonorable man's behavior or dishonorable woman's behavior ($M = 4.28$; $p < 0.05$; $M = 4.69$; $p < 0.05$ respectively) both in the eyes of men ($M = 3.49$) and women ($M = 3.73$). Honorable behavior of women is assessed at the same level as dishonorable behavior. While assessing dishonorable behavior, men exhibit higher negativity ($M = 4.67$) compared to women assessing a dishonorable behavior ($M = 4.14$), women assessing an honorable behavior ($M = 3.93$), and men assessing an honorable behavior ($M = 3.80$).

Fig. 2.

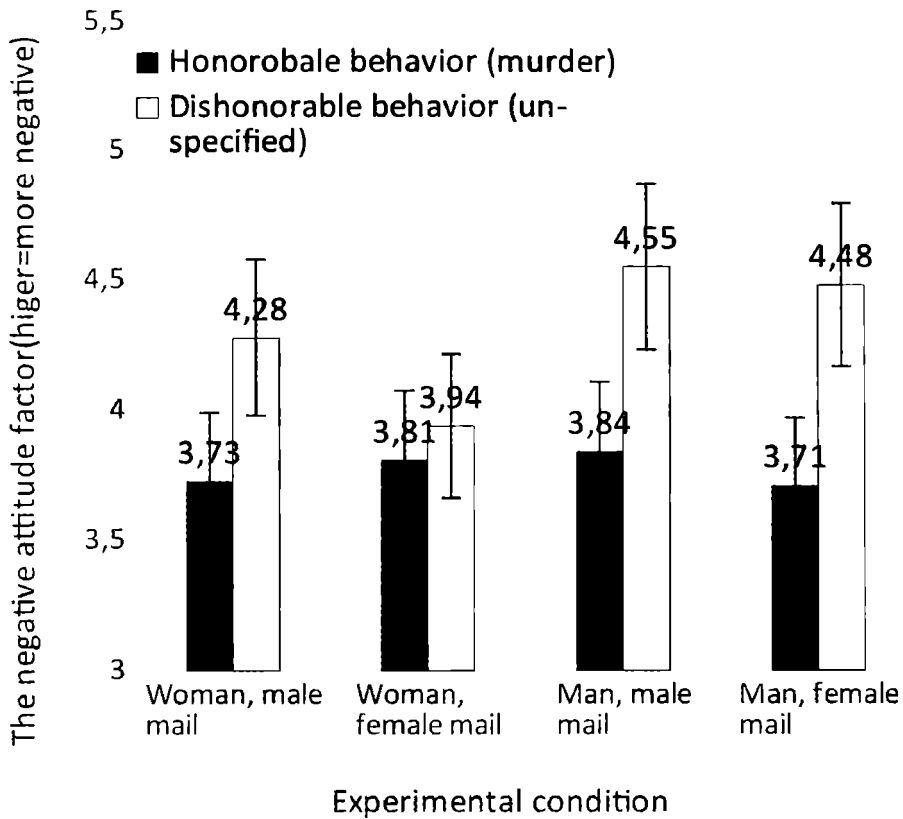


Figure 2 – Average results on the negativity scale, depending on the experimental condition. Error bars represent standard error at $\alpha = 0.05$ confidence interval. Lack of overlap between error bars means the difference statistically significant between groups.

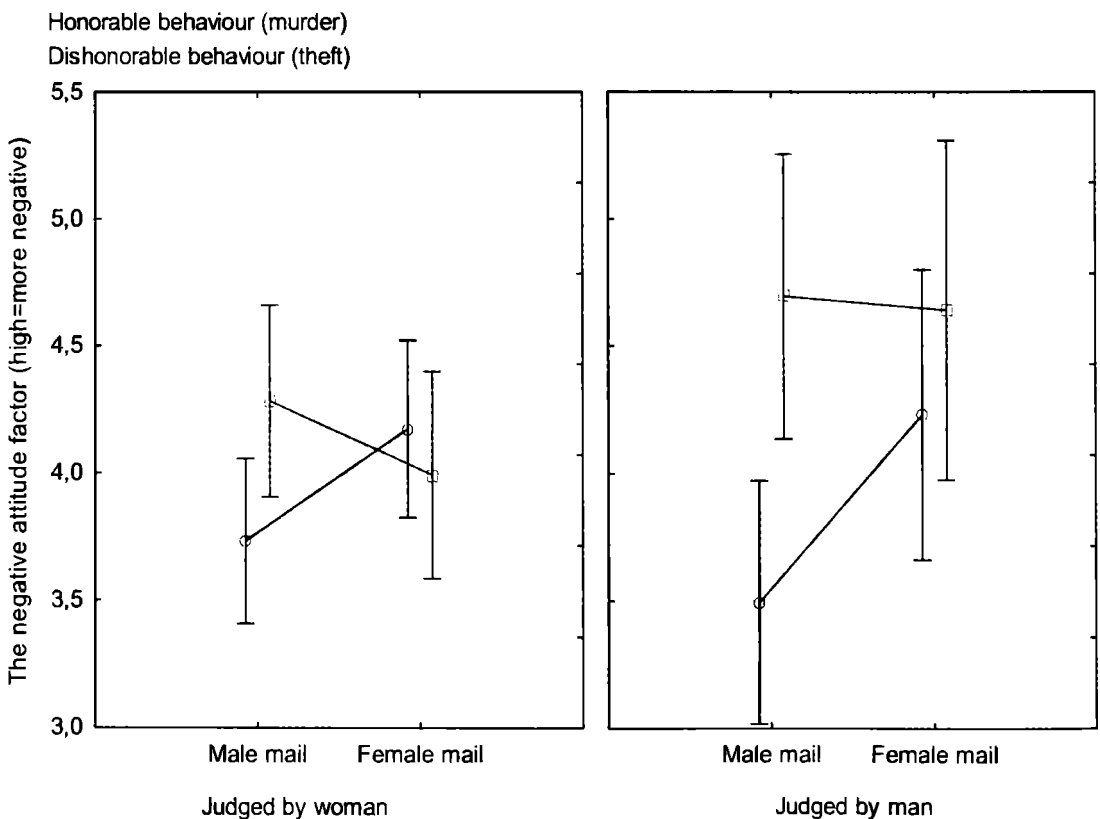


Table 3. Descriptive statistics with a contrast analysis testing the differences between honorable and dishonorable letter evaluation

Negative attitude factor					Contrast analysis
Gender of the evaluator: man	Honorable behavior		Dishonorable behavior		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
Male mail	3.84	0.98	4.55	1.09	6.53*
Female mail	3.71	1.25	4.48	1.36	6.65*
Negative attitude factor					Contrast analysis
Gender of the evaluator: women	Honorable behavior		Dishonorable behavior		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
Male mail	3.78	1.06	4.20	1.25	0.53
Female mail	3.81	1.17	3.94	1.09	5.39*

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.001$

The results seem to confirm the image emerging from the first study; the first hypothesis was rejected and the second and the fourth were accepted. This acknowledges that women and men in the tested sample assess honorable offenses performed by men less negatively. On the other hand, there is no difference between the assessment of honorable and dishonorable offenses in the eyes of the female respondents. What is worth mentioning, contrary to the first study, in the second study there was no ground to reject hypothesis 3 that assumed that men are less negative while assessing the honorable behavior of women compared to dishonorable behavior.

Discussion

The main aim of the study was to evaluate the gender roles in the honor culture in Poland. We assumed that the civilizational and cultural changes, that have been taking place in Poland in recent years, can change the traditional perception of honorable behaviors. An alternative hypothesis assumed that the results of the previous study performed by Szmajke and his team, which supported the active role of men and passive role of women in honor culture, were true. But the obtained results suggest that the assumptions must comply to a higher extent with traditional honor culture in Poland. This picture is seen in both studies. As

study 1 shows, if we compose a letter in which a male/female author describes his/her honorable murder or dishonorable theft, the results replicate the traditional picture of honor culture. Both women and men judge honorable men more positively. Despite the fact that murders, and particularly honorable offenses, are not an everyday part of life of the subjects, an offense performed to defend one's good name is assessed less critically than a theft, though this was justified, too. What is important, this response pattern refers only to men, who were assessed this way by both sexes. An essential contribution of our study is the rejection of two alternative explanations of the obtained effect (at least in the traditional research of the honor culture paradigm). Since it turns out that neither the level of belief in stereotypically female or male gender roles in society (measured by the degree of assignment of typically male roles to men, and typically female roles to women), nor the level of threat sensed in everyday life have effect on the obtained results. So it can therefore be carefully assumed that assessment of women and men through the prism of honor culture is independent from common gender stereotypes. This explanation may serve as another argument for the evolutionary origin of honor culture (Shackelford, 2005), thus opposing rather cultural sources of differences between men and women (Eagly, Wood, 1999; Guerra, et al., 2013).

An interesting observation was made concerning the lack of effect of the sense of threat on the assessment of persons behaving honorably. Perhaps honor culture is a fixed structure towards changing environmental conditions. Alternatively, the generational transfer might still be "transmitted" but in a more non-verbalized manner. In other words, a declarative attitude of mothers and fathers may negate violence, even honorable, but indirectly they may accept their sons' behaviors showing that they are not "wimps"

The essence of the research is to compare assessments made by men and women, as thus it is possible to show possible differences in honor culture sources. But, as we managed to demonstrate coherence between the two sexes judging both men and women, it can be assumed that the results confirm the traditional role of women as honor culture "transmitters" rather, and men as "executors" Following Cohen et al. (1996) we can thus acknowledge that while supporting the principles of honor culture, women apply them only to the opposite sex. Similarly with men – although they allow for aggressive honorable behaviors in other men, they would rather not see it in other women.

Both performed studies comply with the picture mentioned above, with one little exception. This is because in the second study men assessed dishonorable women also more negatively than the women who committed murder (in the first study there was no difference in the assessment of female behaviors in the subjects of both sexes). This effect might be caused by a distinctive

operationalization of dishonorable behavior. As long as there is a fair number of such behaviors as in the case of a male dishonorable behavior in study 2, in the case of women a phrase “honor derogating behaviors abroad” might suggest promiscuity. Thereby, men who assess such “dishonorable” women negatively follow the principles of evolutionism, discrediting both female spouses who are too aggressive (murderers), and those whose past behaviors might bring a risk to men of bringing up someone else’s child.

Limitations

The tested sample does not give the right to extrapolate the results to the whole population. The subjects, however, were students, so they should be less susceptible to traditional culture due to socialization on a university. The subjects did not derive from so-called honor culture enclaves by design. This result was obtained on a sample of students from several faculties and coming from more than one town in Poland, but the layered selection that would consider cultural differences of specific Polish regions would enrich the research. Thus it can be assumed that the obtained results are characteristic, in a way, for young and well-educated people. It would be worth performing studies among several age groups, which might improve the generalization ability of the results. Experimental replication with manipulation of the sense of threat, belief in stereotypical gender roles, or social approval could, to a greater extent, entitle conclusions about lack of effect of these controlled antecedent variables to be drawn.

Summary

To sum up, the article demonstrates that honor culture in a traditional view is still present in the attitudes of the examined students. However, the question concerning the conditions in which women’s behavior as honor culture executors is accepted is still open.

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Appendix: Letters used in the experiment

(killer – woman); male version was the same with different gender indicated
(PL)

...Jest jedna rzecz, którą muszę wyjaśnić ponieważ chciałabym być wobec Pana uczciwa i uniknąć wprowadzenia w błąd. Niedawno wyszłam z więzienia, na które zostałam skazana za udział w bójkę ze skutkiem śmiertelnym. Wdałam się w bijatykę z kobietą, która wcześniej „spotykała się” z moim narzeczonym. Mieszkałam w niewielkiej miejscowości i pewnej nocy spotkałam ją, kiedy wraz z przyjaciółmi wchodziliśmy do baru. Kobieta ta powiedziała, że on zawsze kochał się tylko z nią. Śmiała mi się prosto w twarz i zawołała – „On nigdy naprawdę cię nie kochał”. Byłam młoda i nie umiałam przełknąć obrazy przy wielu świadkach. Chwycałam pierwszą rzecz jaką miałam pod ręką i zdzieliłam ją przez głowę. Przewracając się uderzyła o krzeselko. Wydawało mi się, że jej nie zabiłam, ale zmarła w szpitalu kilka godzin później. Dzisiaj w pełni zdaję sobie sprawę ze zła, jakie uczyniłam...

(EN)

...There is one thing I have to explain because I would like to be honest and avoid misleading You. Recently, I left prison, for which I was convicted for participating in a fight with a fatal outcome. I got into a fight with a woman who had previously „met” with my fiance. I lived in a small town and one night I met her when we went to a bar with friends. She said that he always loved her (implied – made love with her) . She laughed at my face and cried, „He never really loved you”. I was young and could not take an insult in front of so many witnesses. I grabbed the first thing I had at hand and I threw it over her head. Falling over, she hit a chair. It seemed to me that I did not kill her, but she died in the hospital a few hours later. Today I am fully aware of the evil I have done....

(thief – woman) male version was the same with different gender indicated
(PL)

...Jest jedna rzecz, którą muszę wyjaśnić ponieważ chciałabym być wobec Pana uczciwa i uniknąć wprowadzenia w błąd. Niedawno wyszłam z więzienia, na które zostałam skazana za kradzież samochodu. Nie chcę usprawiedliwiać swego postępku. Byłam wtedy młoda i bez pieniędzy, a miałam na utrzymaniu chore dziecko i za pieniądze uzyskane ze sprzedaży

tego samochodu chciałem opłacić zaległe rachunki i kupić lekarstwa. Nie chciałem skrzywdzić właściciela, ani sprawić mu kłopotów. Zostałam skazana za kradzież samochodu i jest mi ogromnie przykro, że popełniłam ten czyn. Kiedy decydowałam się na kradzież byłam ogromnie zdesperowana i sądziłam, że nie ma innego wyjścia, ale wiem, że to mnie nie usprawiedliwia. Dzisiaj w pełni zdaję sobie sprawę ze zła, jakie uczyniłam...

(EN)

...There is one thing I have to explain because I would like to be honest and avoid misleading You. I recently left prison, for which I was convicted for a theft of a car. I do not want to justify my actions. I was young and without money, and I had a sick child and for the money I obtained from the sale of this car I wanted to pay my bills and buy medicine. I did not want to hurt the owner or cause him trouble. I was convicted for the theft of that car and I am very sorry that I committed this act. When I decided to steal I was extremely desperate and I thought that there was no other way, but I know that it does not justify me. Today I am fully aware of the evil I have done ...

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