Honor to the core: Measuring implicit honor ideology endorsement

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ABSTRACT

People from honor-oriented societies emphasize the maintenance and defense of reputation. Prior research has used geographical distinctions or self-report scales to identify honor-oriented regions and people. The current study examined if honor orientations can be assessed at an *implicit* level through the use of the Affect Misattribution Procedure (Payne, Cheng, Govorun, & Stewart, 2005). People high in explicit honor ideology scored significantly higher on a newly developed implicit honor ideology measure than people low in explicit honor. In addition, people high in implicit honor ideology demonstrated a better memory for honor- and dishonor-related words on a surprise memory test. These results support the possibility that honor ideology can be measured implicitly and open up a new realm for research on honor cultures.

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1. Introduction

When Sam Houston enlisted in the army in 1812, his mother reportedly gave him a ring with the word "honor" inscribed in it, a musket, and a set of instructions that were as follows: "Take this musket and never disgrace it: for remember, I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave, than that one of them should turn his back to save his life" (Hayley, 2002, p.12). As this example vividly demonstrates, some people place a greater emphasis on honor than others, even prioritizing it above life itself. This variability in an emphasis on honor is captured by the concept of "culture of honor" (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). A "man of honor" in such societies is respected by others, but he also *demands* respect from others, in part by indicating his intolerance of any threat to his reputation, such as an insult (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996). Perhaps because of this hypersensitivity to reputational threats, physical aggression following a perceived insult tends to be both accepted and encouraged in an honor culture. Likewise, a "woman of honor" is loyal and chaste, putting her family and mate above all else. Failing to live up to these cultural mandates can lead to irreparable damage to one's reputation (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Pitt-Rivers, 1966).

1.1. Measuring culture of honor

A wealth of research has linked honor ideology to a number of important outcomes, including violence, excessive risk-taking, and self-harm (Barnes, Brown, & Tamborski, 2012; Cohen, 1998; Osterman & Brown, 2011). Such research operationalizes honor ideology in two ways. First, honor ideology is often assessed using regional distinctions. The Southern US has long been associated with greater violence than the North, and often this violence is enacted in response to honor threats. Regional differences in violence and honor ideology are thought to result from a historical pattern of White Scotch-Irish immigration to the Southern and Western portions of the country. Based on this geographical pattern, archival studies on regional patterns of violence often dichotomize states in the Southern and Western US as honor states (with the exception of Alaska and Hawaii) and the rest as non-honor states (e.g., Cohen, 1998). This classification system has also been used in lab studies in which White participants from honor states (and Latino participants from any state) composed the "honor group" and White, non-Latino participants from non-honor states composed the non-honor group (e.g. Cohen et al., 1996; IJzerman & Cohen, 2011; Leung & Cohen, 2011). These studies consistently find that men from honor states are more likely to respond to threats and insults with aggression than are men from non-honor states.

More recent research has turned from regional distinctions toward individual differences in honor ideology assessment. Self-report questionnaires that directly assess participants' endorsement of honor-related beliefs and values with respect to family dynamics, anger and retaliation, and feminine loyalty and chastity have become increasingly popular (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012; IJzerman, Van Dijk, & Gallucci, 2007; Rodriguez-Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002). Adapting this individualized approach to honor ideology measurement has a number of benefits. First, it enables researchers to investigate honor dynamics outside of the US

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(e.g., Rodriguez-Mosquera et al., 2002). Second, an individualized approach is less inferential than a geographical or demographic approach and thereby provides investigators with greater measurement precision. As a result, researchers are able to measure individual variability in honor ideology endorsement within a single culture or region.

For these reasons, several self-report measures have been designed to capture individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and values related to honor ideologies; but just as regional distinctions have their limitations, so do these explicit measures. In general, explicit attitude measures are susceptible to social desirability biases and to responders' levels of self-awareness (Kihlstrom, 2004). Partly because of such limitations, researchers developed implicit measures designed to assess attitudes and beliefs that people are unaware of or unwilling to reveal. Such measures have been shown to be quite useful in studying socially sensitive or undesirable attitudes and orientations like prejudice (e.g., Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995), as well as less controversial topics like self-esteem (e.g., Back et al., 2009). To date, though, this implicit measurement approach has not been applied to the study of honor ideology. Just as people are not fully aware of their non-conscious prejudices or self-evaluations, people might not be aware of their implicit endorsement of honor ideologies. The purpose of the present study was to develop and validate an implicit measure of honor ideology.

1.2. The Affect Misattribution Procedure

One approach to assessing implicit attitudes is the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP; Payne et al., 2005). The AMP presents respondents with a series of picture or word primes followed by an ambiguous target (Chinese pictograph). Respondents are instructed to rate the pleasantness of the ambiguous target and are warned not to let their rating be influenced by the prime. Despite this warning, people's ratings of the ambiguous target are unintentionally influenced by their non-conscious attitudes toward the prime. Thus, a Chinese pictograph presented after a picture of a cuddly puppy is more likely to be perceived as pleasant than a pictograph presented after a picture of a snarling bear. The AMP procedure has been used successfully in a number of recent studies to examine a wide range of non-conscious attitudes (e.g., Imhoff & Banse, 2011; Payne, Burkley, & Stokes, 2008; Payne, Govorun, & Arbuckle, 2008).

In support of the procedure's predictive validity, a "George Bush" vs. "John Kerry" AMP correlated at $r = .58$ with people's voting intentions in the 2004 Presidential race (Payne et al., 2005). Similar results were obtained for racial attitudes (Payne

et al., 2005) and intentions to drink alcohol (Payne, Govorun, et al., 2008). Importantly, the moderate correlations obtained between the AMP and explicit attitude measures suggest that the AMP taps into a related but distinct attitude as the explicit measure (Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008). Furthermore, the AMP has also demonstrated good internal consistency (.69 < α < .90; Payne et al., 2005; Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008). Although some researchers have questioned the AMP's implicit nature (e.g., Bar-Anan & Nosek, 2013), later research has supported its validity as an implicit measure (Payne et al., 2013). For these reasons, we chose to create an implicit honor ideology measure using the AMP procedure, which would complement the national, regional, and explicit self-report approaches that have been used to date.

1.3. Present research

To assess implicit honor ideology, we used honor, dishonor, and neutral word primes within the AMP (Fig. 1). We predicted a moderate, positive correlation between the honor AMP and an explicit honor ideology measure, such that people high in explicit honor would find the Chinese pictographs following honor words *more* pleasant and the pictographs following dishonor words *less* pleasant, compared to people low in explicit honor. This expected pattern is consistent with prior demonstrations of a modest correlation between other explicit attitudes and the AMP (Payne et al., 2005; Payne, Burkley, et al., 2008). We also sought to exam-
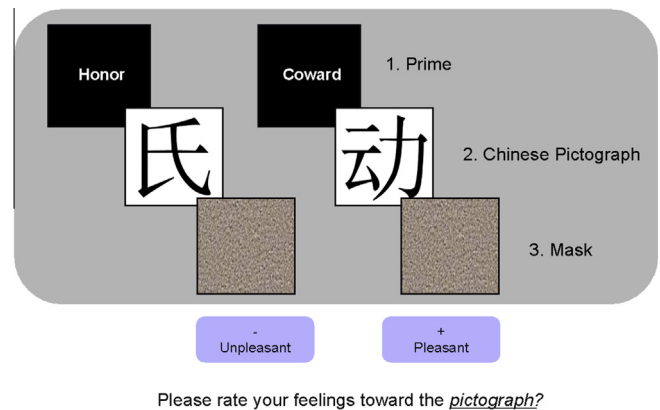

Fig. 1. Honor AMP procedure.

Table 1
Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics for all variables.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	HIM	–						
2	Honor AMP score	.23**	–					
3	AMP honor-pleasant	.20**	.71**	–				
4	AMP neutral-pleasant	.03	.24**	.42**	–			
5	AMP dishonor-pleasant	−.17*	−.86**	−.25**	−.02	–		
6	Honor/dishonor word recall	.16*	.19*	.16*	−.02	−.15*	–	
7	Neutral word recall	−.14*	.10	.04	.08	−.11	.15*	–
	M	4.89	4.13	10.09	8.88	5.96	2.88	0.70
	SD	1.56	4.59	2.44	2.52	3.32	1.66	0.84

Note: HIM = Honor Ideology for Manhood Scale; honor AMP score = the difference between the number of pleasant responses after the honor primes and the number of pleasant responses after the dishonor primes; AMP honor/neutral/dishonor-pleasant = the number of pleasant responses after the honor/neutral/dishonor primes; honor/dishonor word recall = the number of recalled honor words and dishonor words combined; neutral word recall = the number of recalled neutral words.

* $p \leqslant .05$.
** $p \leqslant .01$.