

# Why Do Women Endorse Honor Beliefs? Ambivalent Sexism and Religiosity as Predictors

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**Abstract** Cultures of honor, such as Turkey, prioritize defending individual and family reputations, but in gender-specific ways (Nisbett and Cohen 1996). Men maintain honor via reputations for toughness, aggression, control over women, and avenging insults. Women maintain honor through obedience to men, sexual modesty, and religious piety. Honor beliefs support women's subordination, justifying violence against them (Sev'er and Yurdakul, *Violence against Women*, 7, 964–998, 2001) and therefore should be challenged. Understanding honor beliefs' ideological correlates may inform such efforts. We hypothesized that benevolent sexism, a subjectively favorable system-justifying ideology, would more strongly, positively predict Turkish women's (versus men's) honor beliefs; whereas hostile sexism, which is openly antagonistic toward women, would more strongly, positively predict Turkish men's (versus women's) honor beliefs. Additionally, due to justifications for gender inequality embedded in Islamic religious teachings, we expected Islamic religiosity to positively predict honor beliefs for both genders. A convenience sample of Turkish undergraduates (313 women and 122 men) in Ankara completed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, Religious Orientation Scale, and Honor Endorsement Index. Regression analyses revealed that benevolent (but not hostile) sexism positively predicted women's honor beliefs, whereas hostile (but not benevolent) sexism positively predicted men's honor beliefs. Islamic religiosity

positively predicted honor beliefs for both genders, but (unexpectedly) did so more strongly for men than women. We suggest that combating benevolent sexism and promoting feminist interpretations of Islamic religiosity may help to empower Turkish women to challenge honor beliefs.

**Keywords** Culture of honor · Hostile sexism · Benevolent sexism · Religious Orientation · Muslim sample · Turkish sample

## Introduction

*Honor cultures*, such as Turkey, share core characteristics: they put a premium on defending social reputation (i.e., respect and esteem from others; see Nisbett and Cohen 1996, for a review) and specify virtuous or honorable behavior in gender-specific ways that support male power and female subordination (e.g., Ortnier 1978; Vandello and Cohen 2003). Historically, honor cultures developed in herding societies with weak law enforcement; herds' vulnerability to raids led men to cultivate reputations for toughness and willingness to avenge even minor insults as a deterrent (Nisbett and Cohen 1996). Thus, honor cultures emphasize patriarchal values (e.g., male strength and control, aggression) and, in turn, female subordination: women gain honor through sexual purity and modesty (e.g., maintaining virginity before marriage) and obedience to fathers and husbands (Vandello and Cohen 2003). In Turkey, women who violate these rules stain their family's reputation (Sakallı Uğurlu and Akbaş 2013) and risk severe punishment, including beatings or murder, by male family members (Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001; Tezcan 1999). Between 2003 and 2007, 574 Turkish women were killed by husbands to restore honor, often due to alleged extramarital affairs, rape (for which victims are blamed), or simply

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remarriage after divorce (Human Rights Presidency of Turkey 2007). Understanding honor beliefs' correlates may inform interventions aimed at reducing violence toward women in Turkey, as well as other honor cultures that share similar features (Nisbett and Cohen 1996).

### Overview: A System Justification Approach to Honor Belief Correlates

The current study uses a correlational, survey methodology to examine the ideological correlates of honor beliefs among men and women in Ankara, Turkey. Theoretically, although men enforce honor, honor values persist, in part, by gaining women's endorsement, partly through terror (e.g., threatened violence and honor killings; e.g., see Arat 2010), but also through ideological, including religious, justifications (Anwar 2006; Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009). We suggest that men have straightforward motives for endorsing honor: to legitimize male privilege and dominance, which can be accomplished by endorsing hostile sexist beliefs that overtly and directly demean women. Given that honor beliefs justify women's subordination, inhibit their sexuality, and increase risk of violence from male intimates (e.g., Feldner 2000; İnce et al. 2009), women would seem to have strong disincentives to endorsing honor beliefs. We use a system justification perspective (Jost and Banaji 1994) to suggest that benevolent sexism (a subjectively favorable, but sexist ideology about women's character and roles) uniquely and positively predicts Turkish women's willingness to endorse honor beliefs. Finally, because Islamic scriptures have historically been used to justify women's subordination (e.g., Anwar 2006), we posit that Islamic religiosity will positively predict both genders' endorsement of honor beliefs.

System justification theory (Jost and Banaji 1994; see Jost et al. 2004 for a review) posits that people desire to maintain a positive self-image (ego justification motive), positive group image (group justification motive), and to view society as fair and just (system justification motive). Theoretically, all three motives coincide for members of dominant groups. For example, believing "I am competent; my group is competent; and the positive outcomes I and my group experience reflect a fair society that rewards competence" represent psychologically consistent beliefs. For members of subordinated groups, however, these motives theoretically conflict. For example, believing that "I am competent; my group is competent; and the system is fair" conflicts with the reality that subordinated groups experience social and economic disadvantage. Subordinated group members could potentially resolve this dissonance by viewing society as unfair; however, system-justification theorists argue that doing so implies "I will always be discriminated against" and is therefore psychologically threatening. Instead, Jost and colleagues argue, members of subordinated groups try to reconcile ego, group, and system

justification motives by endorsing ideologies that offer a way to fulfill all three (Jost and Banaji 1994; Jost and Kay 2005; Jost et al. 2003; Kay and Jost 2003).

Theoretically, ideologies can resolve ego, group, and system justification motives for subordinated group members by allocating subjectively favorable, but less valued and low power traits to subordinated groups (Jost et al. 2003). We suggest that benevolent sexism (BS; Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001), reviewed in detail later, serves this function for women by characterizing women as "wonderful" (ego and group justification) while also needing powerful men to protect and provide for them (system justification). System justification theorists (e.g., Jost et al. 2003) posit that such ideologies gain acceptance among many subordinate group members and, in turn, undermine resistance to hostile legitimizing ideologies (e.g., honor beliefs). By contrast, ideologies that justify the system by openly demeaning subordinate group members are theorized to better serve dominant than subordinate group members' ego, group, and system-justifying needs. Hostile sexism (HS; Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001, which we review in more detail below) represents an ideology that justifies male dominance by demeaning women. We posit that while BS will more strongly, positively correlate with women's honor belief endorsement, HS will more strongly, positively correlate with men's honor belief endorsement.

System justification theorists also propose that religious ideologies can serve system-justifying functions for both dominant and subordinate group members (Kay and Napier 2014). Historically, religious beliefs have been used to justify social hierarchy as divinely ordained, offering dominant group members legitimacy for their elevated role and subordinated group members a positive moral identity for accepting lower status roles (fulfilling ego and group justification motives for both dominant and subordinate groups). Examples include prior European Christian belief in the divine rights of kings (e.g., Mitchell and Melville 2013) or the religiously justified caste system in India (e.g., Cotterill et al. 2014). We suggest below that in the Abrahamic religious traditions, including Islam, scripture and religious practices have historically been linked to ideologies that justify gender inequality, including honor beliefs (Arat 2010). Thus, we hypothesize that Islamic religiosity will positively predict Turkish women's and men's honor beliefs.

The following section provides cultural context about Turkey. Subsequent sections, on ambivalent sexism and Islam, provide more detailed rationales for our hypotheses.

### Cultural Context

Turkey's characteristics make it an intriguing nation in which to examine the correlates of honor beliefs as Turkey straddles several divides – between East and West, secular and religious, traditional and modern. A regional power within the

Muslim world (Bank and Karadag 2012), Turkey also seeks membership in the West (e.g., in the EU and NATO, Usul 2014; Yılmaz 2012). Founded with a secular ideology (Berkes 1964), Turkey remains highly Islamic (e.g., Arat 2010). Although the nation has prioritized modernization (Lewis 2002) and is officially committed to legal gender equality (Heper 1985), Turkish society carries the legacy of honor codes that justify women's subordination, enforced through violence, including honor killings justified by religious ideology (Arat 2010; Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001).

Although Turkey has unique features, prior research suggests similarities across honor cultures (Vandello and Cohen 2003), supporting potential generalizability for the current study. Turkey's brand of honor ("Namus" in Turkish) shares basic characteristics with honor codes in other nations. In Turkey, a man's honor depends on female family members' sexual purity, as well as the man's dominance and toughness; insults to honor elicit anger and shame, requiring men to act to restore honor (Tezcan 1999). If women in Turkey are thought to have spoiled their honor, they may be warned verbally, forced to take virginity examinations, punished physically, or even killed (Arın 2001; Örnek Buken and Şahinoğlu 2006; Tezcan 1999). Valuing male toughness, control over women, and avenging insults to reputation, combined with demands for female obedience, subordination, modesty, and sexual purity represent basic features shared with other honor cultures in the Middle East (e.g., Kulwicki 2002; Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001; Tezcan 1999), European nations bordering the Mediterranean such as Spain (Rodriguez Mosquera et al. 2002a, b), and Latin and South America honor cultures (Johnson and Lipsett-Rivera 1998; Vandello and Cohen 2003). In sum, although Turkey has unique characteristics, similar honor beliefs have been shown to exist in other nations.

### Ambivalent Sexism and Honor Beliefs

Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001) distinguishes BS, subjectively favorable but patronizing attitudes that view women as wonderful and pure, but weak and needing men's protection and provision, from HS, explicitly negative, demeaning attitudes toward women that justify male dominance. Glick and Fiske (1996) proposed that BS develops because heterosexual men not only seek to promote male dominance but also intimate interdependence with women (e.g., as wives). They argue that because hostile intergroup relations breed resentment and resistance, men temper HS with BS, which promises women protection and provision so long as they support, rather than challenge, men's power and enact traditional female roles that serve men's needs (e.g., for sex, nurturance, child-rearing).

Theoretically, BS and HS work hand in hand to reinforce gender inequality (Glick and Fiske 2001). BS acts as the

metaphorical carrot, offering women a subjectively positive self and group image, as well as the promise of male protection and provision for accepting gender-traditional, low power roles. HS acts as the metaphorical stick, the threat of hostility (and even aggression) toward women who challenge men's power, either through perceived manipulation or encroachment on male-dominated, powerful roles (e.g., in the workplace).

From a system justification perspective, BS fulfills women's ego and group justification motives by praising women's stereotypically feminine, low status characteristics (e.g., nurturing disposition) and roles (e.g., as caregivers), providing women with a positive self and group image as the gentler gender. For example, items on Glick and Fiske's (1996) BS scale include "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess" and "Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste." At the same time, BS justifies gender inequality as fair by suggesting that men use their greater resources and power to protect and provide for women. For example, BS scale items also include: "Men should be willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing in order to provide financially for the women in their lives" and "Women should be cherished and protected by men." By contrast, HS justifies gender inequality by demeaning women and viewing them as competing with men. Sample HS scale items (Glick and Fiske 1996) include "Women are too easily offended" and "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men."

System justification theory suggests that women should be more willing to endorse BS than HS because the former serves women's ego, group, and system-justifying motives (Glick and Fiske 2001). By contrast, because HS justifies men's dominance by demeaning women (e.g., as manipulative), HS theoretically promotes ego, group, and system-justification for men, but contravenes ego and group justification for women (Glick and Fiske 2001). This view was supported by data from 25 nations, with both student and non-student samples, collected by Glick et al. (2000, 2004). The samples included diverse regions: the U.S. and Western Europe (e.g., England, Germany, Italy, Spain), Latin America (e.g., Argentina, Colombia, Mexico), the Middle East (e.g., Syria, Turkey), and Australasia (e.g., Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan). Factor analyses supported the HS versus BS distinction in all 25 nations. Consistent with the notion that both ideologies justify gender hierarchy, both HS and BS scores were negatively correlated with national gender equality indices; with similar correlations for women and men. Finally, supporting the notion that women are more likely to endorse BS than HS, in all nations studied women (a) endorsed BS significantly more than HS and (b) endorsed HS significantly less than men. Further, women endorsed BS as much as or significantly more than men in many nations.

System justification theory views subjectively positive ideologies such as BS as particularly insidious because they gain endorsement among members of subordinated groups and, in turn, may lessen subordinated group members' resistance to other, more hostile, legitimizing ideologies (Jost and Kay 2005). For example, in their cross-national studies, Glick et al. (2000, 2004) found that women who endorsed BS were also more likely to endorse HS, a hostile legitimizing ideology (i.e., women's BS scores positively correlated with their HS scores). However, women's HS endorsement still consistently remained lower than men's on average, suggesting that although endorsing BS may lessen women's resistance to HS, it does not lead women to accept HS at the same level as men.

Going beyond the correlational evidence that women's BS endorsement may lessen their resistance to hostile legitimizing ideologies, longitudinal studies with female undergraduates in New Zealand showed that women's initial BS scores predicted later increases in HS scores (Sibley et al. 2007). Additionally, among U. S. and Canadian undergraduates and adult convenience samples, Jost and Kay (2005) found that priming BS (but not HS) led women (but not men) to view society as more fair and just. Both lines of research suggest that BS endorsement may be especially important to fostering other system justifying beliefs among women. Although New Zealand, the U.S., and Canada represent very different cultural contexts than Turkey, system-justification theory proposes generalizable dynamics by which subjectively favorable ideologies lessen resistance to hostile legitimizing beliefs among subordinated groups.

In the current paper, we attempt to extend prior findings by showing that Turkish women's BS scores positively predict their endorsement of another hostile legitimizing ideology, honor beliefs. If BS (due to its ability to serve women's ego, group, and system justification motives) lessens women's resistance to ideologies that subordinate women, then BS scores should positively predict women's, more so than men's, honor belief endorsement. We seek to show that BS uniquely predicts women's honor belief endorsement after controlling for HS scores. If the system justification perspective is correct, it is women's willingness to accept BS (which fulfills ego and group justification) that uniquely lessens resistance to hostile ideologies such as HS and honor beliefs. To test this idea rigorously requires showing that BS positively correlates with women's honor belief endorsement after controlling for its relationship to HS.

By contrast, we suggest that men's motives for endorsing honor beliefs directly reflect vested interests in maintaining their gender's power and privileges. Among dominant group members, hostile ideologies about disadvantaged and subordinated groups tend to be strongly correlated (e.g., among White students in the U.S. toward African-Americans; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Thus, we expected men's HS scores to positively correlate with honor belief endorsement.

Although BS also reinforces men's privileged status, it does so more subtly and prior research (in the U.S. and Canada) shows that, unlike with women, priming BS does not increase men's system justification beliefs (Jost and Kay 2005). Thus we propose that HS, even after controlling for its relationship with BS, should uniquely and positively predict men's, but not women's, honor belief endorsement.

In sum, we posit. *Hypothesis 1*: BS scores will more strongly, positively correlate with Turkish women's than Turkish men's honor belief endorsement. *Hypothesis 2*: HS scores will more strongly, positively correlate with Turkish men's than Turkish women's honor belief endorsement. In each case, we expected the predicted relationships to emerge most clearly after controlling for the (typically positive) HS-BS relationship (Glick et al. 2000, 2004).

### Islamic Religiosity and Honor Beliefs

We chose to examine Islamic religiosity as another honor belief correlate because, although the Qur'an emphasizes equality among human beings, passages from the text can be interpreted as justifying discrimination against women in social and legal obligations (Anwar 2006). The Qur'an includes verses that seem to offer both subjectively hostile and benevolent justifications for gender hierarchy. On the hostile side, the Qur'an calls for women to submit to men as their inferiors (e.g., to obey their husbands; Anwar 2006). On the subjectively benevolent side, the Qur'an instructs men to protect and provide for women (Anwar 2006). The following Qur'an passage represents an example of apparent sexist ambivalence, combining the notion that men are women's protectors and providers (BS), while also stating that women must remain subordinate to men and be brought back in line with (albeit mild) punishment when they exert their own will rather than obey men (HS):

*"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient... As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) chastise them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, Great (above you all)."* (Qur'an, al-Nisa, 4:34; translation by Ali, 1934, p. 64; cited in Anwar 2006, p.18).

Supporting the notion that Islamic religiosity is associated with both hostile and benevolent justifications for women's subordination, prior research in Turkey found that Islamic religiosity correlated with BS for both genders and with HS among men (Taşdemir and Sakallı-Uğurlu 2010). The fact that



women's religiosity correlated only with BS, not HS, is consistent with our argument that women are more likely to endorse benevolent than hostile system-legitimizing beliefs. Speculatively, Turkish women may be more attuned to the subjectively benevolent (rather than hostile) justifications for women's lower status that the Qur'an provides.

The relationship between Islamic religiosity and honor beliefs, however, may not be completely accounted for by correlations between religiosity and ambivalently sexist beliefs. By justifying gender roles as divinely mandated, religious devotion may uniquely contribute to honor belief endorsement, even after controlling for scores on the HS and BS scales (which do not assess religious justifications). Further, from a system justification perspective, religious justifications theoretically fulfill ego and group justifications for members of both dominant and subordinated groups by linking a devout moral self and group image to complying with religious strictures (Kay and Napier 2014). For the religious adherent, being a "good man" or a "good woman" by enacting gender-traditional traits and roles becomes equated with being a moral, religious individual.

Given the justifications for women's subordination that can be found in the Qur'an, we propose *Hypothesis 3*: Both Turkish men's and women's religiosity will positively correlate with honor belief endorsement. We expected that the correlation between religiosity and honor beliefs would not be wholly accounted for by relationships between religiosity and ambivalently sexist attitudes. Further, we did not expect this relationship to be stronger for either gender because devotion to divinely mandated roles and behavior can serve ego and group justification motives (as devout and moral) for both genders. Nevertheless, because women across the globe are typically as or more religiously devout and spiritual than men (Anwar 2006), any relationship between women's religiosity and honor beliefs assumes special importance for understanding why women might accept honor codes.

### Summary of Hypotheses

*Hypothesis 1*: BS scores will more strongly, positively correlate with Turkish women's than Turkish men's honor belief endorsement. *Hypothesis 2*: HS scores will more strongly, positively correlate with Turkish men's than Turkish women's honor belief endorsement. *Hypothesis 3*: Islamic religiosity will positively predict both Turkish men's and women's honor belief endorsement. We expected these relationships to emerge most clearly after controlling for correlations between the predictor variables using regression analysis. Thus our analysis strategy was to enter the predictors simultaneously in Step 1 (after determining that multicollinearity was sufficiently modest to justify regression). To test our gender moderation hypotheses (*Hypotheses 1 & 2*), we first conducted a regression analysis that included both genders. Thus we could

formally test for gender moderation at Step 2 by entering interaction terms (gender x BS, gender x HS, and gender x religiosity). Finally, after finding gender moderation, we conducted separate regression analyses for women and men.

## Method

### Participants

Participants in the final sample were 313 female ( $M_{age}=20.37$ ,  $SD=1.50$ ) and 122 male ( $M_{age}=21.51$ ,  $SD=1.95$ ) undergraduates in Turkey. A convenience sample was recruited from individuals in introductory psychology courses given to students in various divisions (e.g., business administration, engineering) of the Middle East Technical University. We included only Turkish nationals (25 women, 24 men were excluded because they were not Turkish) who defined their religious affiliation as Islam (10 women, 23 men were excluded because they were not Muslim) in the data analysis.

### Procedure

After ethics committee approval, students were informed in class about the opportunity to participate in an online study about "attitudes towards women and religiosity" and were provided with a web address for the survey. Participants who took the online survey completed several questionnaires, including Turkish translations of the Religious Orientations Scale (Allport and Ross 1967), the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick and Fiske 1996) and the Honor Endorsement Index (Vandello et al. 2009). They also reported demographic information such as age, gender, national origin. Participants received extra class credit for participating, though participation was voluntary.

### Measures

#### *Honor Beliefs*

Participants' honor belief endorsement was measured by a Turkish translation of Vandello et al.'s (2009) Honor Endorsement Index (HEI; originally translated by Ceylan and Sakallı-Uğurlu 2012, and successfully back-translated by one of the current authors). We chose this scale for generalizability as it captures core honor beliefs present in various honor cultures (Nisbett and Cohen 1996). The scale includes nine items that address female honor (e.g., "A woman must protect the family's good reputation") and male honor (e.g., "A man must defend his honor at any cost"). Items were rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) scale, with higher scores indicating greater honor endorsement. Because the scale had not previously been validated in Turkey, we

conducted a factor analysis, which supported a single factor solution, with all items loading .39 or better on a first factor, which explained 44 % of the variance (eigenvalue=4.04). Although a second factor had an eigenvalue of 1.25, it accounted for much less variance (13 %). Both a scree plot and indications that the second factor reflected method variance (its high-loading items were the two reverse-worded items) supported treating the HEI as a single-factor scale. Consistent with Vandello et al. (2009), we averaged the nine items (after rescoring reversal items) to compute a reliable HEI score,  $\alpha=.84$ . See Appendix 1 for the scale items in English and Turkish.

### Ambivalent Sexism

Participants' sexist attitudes toward women were measured by the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick and Fiske 1996), a 22-item inventory with two subscales: HS includes 11 items that assess overtly negative sexist attitudes toward women (e.g., "Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them"); BS includes 11 items measuring subjectively positive but patronizing sexist attitudes (e.g., "In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men"). We used a previously validated Turkish ASI (Sakallı-Uğurlu 2002; see this publication for the Turkish translation). Items were rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) scale such that higher scores indicated more sexist attitudes. HS and BS scores were computed by averaging all items in each subscale. Both subscales showed acceptable reliability, HS:  $\alpha=.86$ ; BS:  $\alpha=.80$ .

### Islamic Religiosity

Participants' religiosity was measured using the Religious Orientations Scale, which has two subscales (Allport and Ross 1967; Cirhinlioğlu 2010; see this publication for Turkish translation). The 11-item intrinsic religious orientation subscale assesses intrinsic belief in religious teachings and practices without any utilitarian motivation (e.g., "Quite often I have been keenly aware of the presence of God or of the Divine Being"). The 11-item extrinsic religious orientation subscale assesses perceived social and personal gains associated with religious practice (e.g., "The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection"). All items were rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) scale, with higher scores indicating stronger religiosity. See Appendix 2 for items in Turkish and English. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 22-item scale using a direct oblimin rotation. The analysis supported a single factor solution, with all items loading .21 or better on a first factor, which explained 49.89 % of the variance (eigen value=7.98). Although another factor had an eigen value over 1 (1.48), it accounted for much less variance (9 %). Both a scree plot and the presence of

many cross-loading items on the second factor supported treating religiosity as a single-factor scale. After eliminating six items because they had item-total correlations below .2, a reliable religiosity score was computed by averaging the remaining 16 items (rescoring reversal items),  $\alpha=.93$ . This final scale included 10 items originally designed to measure intrinsic religiosity and six items originally designed to measure extrinsic religiosity.

## Results

### Gender Differences in Belief Endorsement

Data screening revealed no multivariate outliers. We tested for gender differences in religious orientation, ambivalent sexism, and honor beliefs using a one-way MANOVA (see Table 1 for means). The MANOVA revealed a significant gender effect,  $F(4, 429)=7.95, p<.001$ . *Post hoc* comparisons showed men endorsed honor beliefs,  $F(1, 432)=19.75, p<.001$ , and HS,  $F(1, 432)=10.90, p<.01$ , more than women. There were no significant gender differences for religiosity,  $F(1, 432)=.09, ns$ , or BS,  $F(1, 432)=2.16, ns$ . Additionally, as noted in Table 1, the men in our sample were significantly older statistically, though the difference in means was only slightly over a year.

### Correlates of Honor Beliefs

Table 2 reports zero-order correlations among the variables, with male participants above and female participants below the diagonal. For both genders, consistent with past research (Glick et al. 2000, 2004), HS and BS were significantly positively correlated. Likewise, for both male and female participants, HS and BS were positively and significantly correlated with religiosity. Further, all predictors (HS, BS, and Islamic religiosity) correlated positively and significantly with honor belief endorsement for both genders.

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics

	Women ( <i>N</i> =313)		Men ( <i>N</i> =122)		Gender Difference
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Age	20.37	1.50	21.51	1.95	6.53***
HS	3.72	.84	4.01	.80	3.30**
BS	3.85	.82	3.98	.75	1.47
Religiosity	3.63	1.02	3.67	1.05	.39
Honor Beliefs	3.42	.87	3.85	.94	4.50***

All scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). *HS* Hostile Sexism, *BS* Benevolent Sexism

\*\* $p<.01$ , \*\*\* $p<.001$

**Table 2** Correlations separated by participant gender

Variables	HS	BS	REL	HEI
HS	—	.19*	.35***	.51***
BS	.41***	—	.43***	.36***
REL	.24***	.38***	—	.68***
HEI	.30***	.57***	.51***	—

Men's scores are shown on upper diagonal. All scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). *HS* Hostile Sexism, *BS* Benevolent Sexism, *REL* Religiosity, *HEI* Honor Endorsement Index

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

### Initial Regression to Test for Gender Moderation

We computed multiple regression incorporating interaction terms between participant gender and each predictor to test for the predicted gender moderation. Specifically, *Hypothesis 1* posited that BS would positively predict honor belief endorsement more for women than men. *Hypothesis 2* posited that HS would positively predict honor beliefs more for men than women. Both hypotheses entail 2-way interactions (gender x BS and gender x HS, respectively). *Hypothesis 3* predicted that Islamic religiosity would positively correlate with honor belief endorsement for both genders, without any expected gender moderation; thus, an interaction would challenge this hypothesis.

To determine whether the data met the assumption of collinearity, we computed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). As a rule of thumb, multicollinearity does not pose a threat if the VIF is less than 10 (O'Brien 2007) or, more conservatively, less than 5 (Alauddin and Son Ngheim 2010). Results indicated low levels of multicollinearity (for BS,  $VIF = 1.291$ ; for HS,  $VIF = 1.205$ ; and for religiosity,  $VIF = 1.209$ ). The hierarchical regression is reported in Table 3. Centered versions of all

**Table 3** Hierarchical regression predicting honor beliefs (N=435)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
HS	.15	.04	.14***	-.26	.13	-.24*
BS	.34	.05	.29***	.79	.14	.70***
REL	.35	.03	.39***	.09	.10	.10
Gender	.32	.07	.16***	.31	.07	.15***
HS x Gender				.30	.09	.38**
BS x Gender				-.35	.10	-.40**
REL x Gender				.20	.08	.31*
F(df)	90.09 (4429)			57.81 (7426)		
$R^2$	.46***			.49***		

HS, BS, and REL were centered. *HS* Hostile Sexism, *BS* Benevolent Sexism; *REL* Religiosity

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

predictors (HS, BS, religiosity) and participant gender (female=0, male=1) were simultaneously entered at Step 1 to predict honor beliefs. Step 2 added two-way interactions between participant gender and each of the predictors (HS, BS, and religiosity) to test the gender moderation hypotheses. At Step 1, the regression revealed significant main effects for all variables: HS, BS, religiosity, and participant gender. Higher HS, BS, and religiosity scores, as well as being male (versus female) were all associated with stronger honor belief endorsement. Our central gender-moderation hypotheses (*Hypotheses 1 & 2*) were tested in Step 2. *Hypothesis 1* predicted a gender x BS interaction (BS more strongly, positively correlated with honor beliefs for women than men). *Hypothesis 2* predicted a gender x HS interaction (HS more strongly, positively correlated with honor beliefs for men than women).

Supporting *Hypothesis 1*, the gender x BS interaction was significant. Supporting *Hypothesis 2*, the gender x HS interaction was significant. *Hypothesis 3* predicted only a main effect for religiosity; however, we found an unanticipated gender x religiosity interaction.

### Separate Regressions for Women and Men

We next conducted separate regressions for male and female participants (see Table 4). Supporting *Hypothesis 1*, BS significantly and positively predicted honor beliefs for women, but not for men. Supporting *Hypothesis 2*, HS significantly predicted honor beliefs for men, but not for women. Supporting *Hypothesis 3*, religiosity significantly predicted honor beliefs for both women and men; however, the unexpected gender x religiosity interaction in the initial analysis indicates that the former association was weaker than the latter.

In sum, *Hypothesis 1* (BS positively correlates with honor beliefs more for women than for men) and *Hypothesis 2* (HS positively correlates with honor beliefs more for men than for women) were strongly supported. *Hypothesis 3* (Islamic

**Table 4** Regressions predicting honor beliefs separately for women and men

Variable	Women			Men		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
HS	.05	.05	.05	.35	.08	.30***
BS	.44	.05	.42***	.10	.09	.07
Religiosity	.29	.04	.34***	.48	.07	.54***
F (df)	76.483 (3309)			47.056 (3117)		
$R^2$	.43***			.55***		

HS, BS, and Religiosity were centered. *HS* Hostile Sexism, *BS* Benevolent Sexism

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

religiosity positively correlates with honor beliefs for both genders) was supported in that religiosity significantly and positively predicted honor beliefs for women and men; however, a gender  $\times$  religiosity interaction indicated that this association was unexpectedly stronger for men than women.

## Discussion

Why might women endorse honor beliefs that disadvantage their gender? Theoretically, subjectively favorable (as compared to hostile) legitimizing ideologies gain endorsement among subordinate group members, in turn leading them to be less resistant to more hostile legitimizing ideologies such as honor beliefs (see Sibley et al. 2007). By contrast, dominant group members are theorized to use hostile ideologies that demean subordinate groups to justify their power and privileges (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Although the current study did not test a causal sequence, we found correlational results consistent with these theoretical views. Turkish women endorsed BS and religious piety as strongly as men, and both, in turn, predicted women's honor beliefs. Supporting *Hypothesis 1*, BS predicted honor beliefs only for women but not for men, whereas, consistent with *Hypothesis 2*, HS predicted honor beliefs for men but not for women. Unexpectedly, gender moderated Islamic religiosity's relation to honor beliefs: religiosity more strongly predicted men's than women's honor beliefs. Importantly, however, and consistent with *Hypothesis 3*, religiosity remained a significant (even if weaker) predictor of honor beliefs for women as well as men.

Despite significant gender differences, note that women's average honor belief scores were above the neutral midpoint on a 1 to 6 scale and, in an absolute sense, not much lower than men's (3.42 versus 3.85). This result reinforces the need to better understand the factors that lead Turkish women to endorse honor beliefs. Future research should use longitudinal designs to better test whether, consistent with our speculations, BS and religiosity exert a causal influence on women's honor belief endorsement. The correlational results obtained here identify these ideologies as possible culprits worthy of further study.

Although the current study focused on Islamic religiosity as a predictor of honor beliefs, other major world religions (including Christianity and Judaism) have similarly patriarchal views embedded in scripture and religious practices (e.g., Moxnes 1996). Scriptural literalism among Christians in the U. S. (Burn and Busso 2005), adherence to Catholicism in Poland (Mikolajczak and Pietrzak 2014) and Spain (Glick et al. 2002), and Jewish fundamentalism in Israel (Gaunt 2012) all correlate with sexist beliefs. Thus, there is reason to suspect that, for example, in Christian-dominated honor cultures, the dominant religion predicts honor beliefs

for both genders. For example, in Latin America, marianismo uses a religious exemplar (the Virgin Mary) to justify honor ideals (piety, devotion, and obedience) for women (Castillo et al. 2010). However, local interpretations and practices may diminish or even reverse these effects. For example, among egalitarian sects, religious teachings could challenge sexist beliefs and honor codes. Feminist Muslim scholars have called for such reforms in Islam (Hassan 2003; Wadud 2006), suggesting how to interpret the Qur'an as compatible with gender equality. Organizations in Turkey, such as the *Muslim Initiative against Violence against Women* (KSK; kadasiddetekarsimuslumanlar.blogspot.com.tr) argue that the Qur'an disapproves violence against women.

Indeed, although honor killings are most prevalent in regions dominated by fundamentalist Islamic beliefs (Anwar 2006; Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009), the Qur'an does not directly justify such violence. Religious fundamentalists tend dogmatically to adhere to ancient scriptures and idealize a past with strict gender roles and expectations, justifying gender inequality as divinely mandated (Anwar 1999; Furseth and Repstad 2006; Hoffmann and Bartkowski 2008; Pollit 2002). But modern fundamentalist movements may be more reactionary in some ways than ancient practices; for example, Mohammed's wife and daughter were important leaders in early Islam (Hassan 2003), suggesting the possibility of feminist interpretations of Islam that could better accommodate egalitarian gender attitudes (Hassan 1999, 2003; Wadud 1999, 2006).

Speculatively, it is possible that the women, as compared to men, in our sample interpreted Islam in a less sexist way. We found an unexpected interaction between participant gender and Islamic religiosity such that the positive correlation between women's religiosity and honor beliefs was less than men's. One possible explanation is that women were less likely to interpret Islamic teachings as consistent with honor codes. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that although the correlation between religiosity and honor belief endorsement was lower for women, it was still significant and positive (i.e., greater religiosity was associated with greater likelihood of endorsing honor beliefs).

## Limitations and Generalizability

Possible limitations on generalizing the correlation between Islamic religiosity and honor beliefs include potential regional differences, both within Turkey and between Turkey and other Islamic nations. However, according to survey data, religiosity among people in Ankara, where the current study was conducted, is generally similar to religiosity elsewhere in Turkey. Specifically, 70.8 %, compared to 68.1 % in the nation overall, labeled themselves as "religious" and 19.9 %, compared to 19.4 % in the nation overall, labeled themselves as "very religious" (see <http://www2.diyamet.gov.tr/StratejiGelistirme/>



[Afisalanlari/ dinihayat.pdf](#)). These similarities suggest the possibility that our results may generalize to other parts of Turkey. Further, because Islamic religiosity has also been linked to justifying honor codes in other Middle Eastern nations (e.g., Kulwicksi 2002; Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001; Tezcan 1999), our findings may potentially generalize regionally.

Another potential limitation was the failure, within our sample, to find a distinction between intrinsic religiosity – defined as deeply held belief in the religion's tenets – and extrinsic religiosity – defined as superficial conformity to religious practices, such as attending church because family and neighbors do so (Allport 1954; Allport and Ross 1967). However, based on their comprehensive review of prior theory and research, Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) questioned the intrinsic-extrinsic distinction as theoretically oversimplified and empirically lacking reliability or a consistent factor structure. Further, Allport and Ross's (1967) assumption that intrinsic religiosity reduces, whereas extrinsic religiosity increases prejudice was developed with respect to racial and ethnic prejudice, not sexism. For example, Allport and Ross theorized that extrinsic religiosity disposes people to "...distrust strange ethnic groups" (p. 442) whereas intrinsically religious people internalize scriptural doctrines of tolerance toward "one's fellow *man*" (p. 441, emphasis added). Empirically, Allport and Ross exclusively examined (in U.S. samples) religiosity's relationship to racism, anti-Semitism, and people of different nationalities. The argument that intrinsic religiosity reduces prejudice relied on assumptions that religious scriptures in major world religions advocate a "basic creed of brotherhood" (Allport 1954, p. 453). When it comes to sexism, as noted above, the Abrahamic traditions provide scriptural support justifying sexist practices, suggesting that intrinsic as well as extrinsic religiosity may predict sexism.

The current study's results are limited by its correlational design, prohibiting causal inferences. We have taken care not to interpret our predictor variables as causing honor beliefs. From a methodological standpoint, characterizing the sexism and religiosity variables as predictors and honor beliefs as the criterion represent arbitrary choices. Bidirectional causal influences seem likely and we cannot rule out third variable explanations. However, because honor beliefs have such a strong role justifying violence against women within honor cultures, we were particularly interested in treating honor beliefs as the outcome variable.

The larger sample of women than men in the study represents another weakness. Although more equal samples sizes would be desirable, difference in numbers did not especially privilege our hypotheses. For example, the smaller number of men worked against supporting the expectation that HS and religiosity would significantly predict men's (but not women's) honor beliefs. Further, the unexpected interaction we obtained between gender and religiosity, such that men's

religiosity better predicted honor beliefs than women's religiosity emerged despite the smaller numbers of men.

Finally, studying only university students in Ankara represents another limitation. Ankara is the second largest urban center in Turkey and skews toward a younger and relatively more educated population compared to the nation as a whole ([http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1047](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1047)). Thus, our respondents cannot be considered representative of Turkey. Future studies should obtain more diverse (e.g., greater range on age and education) samples in Turkey and test generalization to other honor cultures.

## Conclusion

We began by asking why women might accept honor ideologies that directly advocate women's subordination and justify violence against them. The current study's correlational results were consistent with the answer we proposed: within cultures of honor, women who endorse benevolently sexist beliefs that men will protect and provide for them and religious teachings that equate spiritual purity with submission to men are more likely to also accept honor beliefs. Speculatively, we suggest that serving women's ego and group justification needs by providing a subjectively favorable identity (e.g., as kind, moral, and spiritually pure), benevolent (rather than hostile) sexism and Islamic religiosity may represent crucial psychological levers for obtaining women's compliance with honor codes. If so, efforts to combat honor codes would do well to try to reduce women's adherence to benevolently sexist ideals (e.g., by promoting awareness of BS's negative effects) and to campaign within religious organizations to ameliorate or reinterpret sexist teachings.

**Compliance with ethical standards** The research complied with APA ethical standards and was reviewed and approved by an IRB prior to conducting the research. The manuscript has not been submitted to any other journal.

## Appendix 1

### Namusu Onaylama Ölçeği (Honor Endorsement Index)

1. Bir kadın ailesinin şerefini korumalıdır. (A woman must protect the family's good reputation.)
2. Bir erkeğin namusundan çok daha önemli şeyler var. (There are many things that are much more important than a woman's honor.)
3. Bir kadının namusu ailedeki erkekler tarafından korunmalıdır. (A woman's honor must be defended by the men in the family.)
4. Bir kadın saf ve dürüst olmalıdır. (A woman must be pure and honest.)

5. Bir erkek ne olursa olsun namusunu korumalıdır. (A man must defend his honor at any cost.)
6. Bir erkek ne olursa olsun ailesinin namusunu korumalıdır. (A man must defend his family's honor at any cost.)
7. Gerçek bir erkek bir aşağılama karşısında kendini savunacak kapasiteye sahip olmalıdır. (A real man must be capable of defending himself against an insult.)
8. Bir kadının namusundan çok daha önemli şeyler var. (There are many things that are much more important than a man's honor.)
9. Bir erkek sert olmalıdır. (A man must be tough.)

## Appendix 2

### Dini Yönelim Ölçeği (Religious Orientation Scale)

1. Dini inançlarımı, hayatımın diğer tüm alanlarına uygulamak için elimden geleni yapmaya çalışırım. (I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.)
2. Dini inancın bana sağladığı en büyük yarar hüznün ve talihsizliklerle karşılaştığımda beni rahatlatmasıdır. (What religion offers most is comfort when sorrow and misfortune strike.)
3. Hayata bakışımın temelinde dini inançlarım yatar. (My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.)
4. Dua etmemim başlıca nedeni dua etmem gerektiğinin öğretilmesidir. (I pray chiefly because I have been taught to pray.)
5. Dürüst ve ahlaklı bir yaşam sürdürdüğüm sürece, neye inandığım çok fazla önemli değildir. (It doesn't matter so much what I believe as long as I lead a moral life.)
6. Şartlar engellenmediği sürece hergün beş vakit namaz kılarım. (If not prevented by unavoidable circumstances, I pray God five times a day.)
7. Senede bir kere malımın zekatını veriririm. (I give zakat once a year.)
8. Şartlar engellenmediği sürece; insanın ömründe bir kez hacca gitmesi gerektiğini düşünürüm. (If not prevented by unavoidable circumstances, I believe in the necessity of pilgrimage.)
9. Kendi sosyal ve ekonomik refahımı korumak için zaman zaman dini inançlarımdan ödün vermem gerektiğini düşünürüm. (Occasionally I find it necessary to compromise my religious beliefs in order to protect my social and economic wellbeing.)
10. Dini amaçlı bir gruba katılacak olsam sadece kuran kurslarında ya da toplumsal yardımı amaçlayan dini gruplara katılırdım. (If I were to join a church group I

- would prefer to join A) a Bible Study group or, B) a social fellowship.)
11. Dindar olmakla birlikte hayatta daha birçok önemli şey olduğuna inanıyorum. (Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.)
12. İnançla ilgili kitap okurum. (I read literature about my faith (or church) frequently, occasionally, rarely, never.)
13. Dini tefekküre dalmak için zaman ayırmak benim açımdan önemlidir. (It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and meditation.)
14. Dini bir cemaate üye olmamın bir nedeni toplum içinde bana mevkii kazandırmasıdır. (One reason for my being a church member is that such membership helps to establish a person in the community.)
15. Çok sık olarak Allah'ın veya kutsal bir varlığın mevcudiyetini güçlü bir şekilde hissedirim. (Quite often I have been keenly aware of the presence of God or of the Divine Being.)
16. İbadet etmek bana, mutlu ve huzurlu bir hayat sağlamalıdır. (The purpose of prayer is to secure a happy and peaceful life.)
17. İnançlı biri olsam bile dinsel düşüncelerimin günlük yaşamımı ve ilişkilerimi etkilemesine izin vermem. (Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs)
18. Şartlar engellenmediği sürece; ramazan ayında oruç tutarım. (If not prevented by unavoidable circumstances, I fast in Ramadan)
19. İbadet yerleri iyi sosyal ilişkiler kurmam açısından önemlidir. (The place of worship is most important as a place to formulate good social relationships.)
20. Dine ilgi duymamın başlıca nedeni ibadet yerlerinin bana sıcak bir sosyal ortam sağlamasıdır. (A primary reason for my interest in religion is that my church is a congenial social activity.)
21. Hayatın anlamıyla ilgili pek çok soruyu cevaplandırdığı için din benim açımdan özellikle önemlidir. (Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life).
22. İbadetin en önemli amacı kişiye huzur vermesi ve güven sağlamasıdır. (The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection.)

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