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**Gender Differences in the Perception of Honour Killing in Individualist versus
Collectivist Cultures: Comparison between Italy and Turkey**

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Gender Differences in the Perception of Honour Killing in Individualist versus Collectivist Cultures: Comparison between Italy and Turkey

Gender differences in the perception of honour killing were investigated in two countries, both traditionally considered honour cultures but with differing degrees of individualism and collectivism: Italy and Turkey. Ninety-six Turkish undergraduate students attending Istanbul University (40 % males, mean age = 21.2 years) and 68 Italian undergraduate students attending Turin University (34 % males, mean age = 24.6 years) filled in a questionnaire which assessed the perception of three honour killing scenarios (scenario 1: alleged adultery, scenario 2: adultery, scenario 3: adultery *in flagrante delicto*). The questionnaire measured the attribution of assailant and victim responsibility, the proposed punishment for the assailant, and the evaluation of the incidents as crimes. Results showed that regardless gender Turkish participants attributed more responsibility to the victim and less responsibility to the assailant, and proposed less severe punishments than the Italian participants. Moreover, Turkish men attributed less responsibility to the assailant and proposed less severe punishments than Turkish women. Finally, there was an interaction of gender by culture by scenario: Turkish women attributed less responsibility to the victim in the case of alleged adultery, compared to their male counterparts. These results are discussed in terms of the complex interaction between gender roles and the individualist versus collectivist social organization of Italy and Turkey, and the profound social changes that both countries have undergone in recent decades.

KEYWORDS: Honour killings; Violence against women; Gender roles; Individualism versus Collectivism; Turkey; Italy

INTRODUCTION

Pordenone (northeast Italy), 15 September 2009. Saana Dafani, an 18-year-old Moroccan girl, and Massimo, her 31-year-old Italian boyfriend, had gone out for dinner that evening. While still on their way, at about 7 p.m., they ran into the girl's father, El Ketawi Dafani. Massimo stopped the car and the initial dispute soon turned into violence. Saana's father lashed out at the two young people,

venting his rage against a relationship he had never approved of. Suddenly he drew a knife. Saana attempted to run away followed by her father, while her boyfriend tried to get hold of him. Unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done: Massimo, who had been injured during the assault, could not save Saana who was stabbed to death by her father. In Morocco, the tradition does not allow a woman to live with a man to whom she is not married. Saana had betrayed these family rules by moving in with Massimo some months before. She paid for her misconduct with her own life (“*Marocchina 18enne uccisa*”, 2009).

How do women and men from countries traditionally considered honour cultures perceive incidents like the one described above? Will they blame the victim or attribute more responsibility to the assailant? Will they propose a severe punishment or not? Will they think that a crime happened or not? Will their perceptions be different if they are men or women or if they belong to an individualist versus a collectivist cultural context?

The present study aims at investigating the effects of gender and individualist versus collectivist culture on the perception of an extreme form of honour-related violence against women: an honour killing committed by a husband for reasons of different “misbehaviours” by his wife. In more in detail, two main issues will be addressed:

1) The influence of gender on the perception of honour killing: although literature suggests that in general men are more prone to accept any type of violence than women (for a review, see Frieze and Li 2010), and that they tend to justify violence against women more than their female counterparts (Cowan 2000; White and Kurpius 2002), there are contrasting results about gender differences in the attitudes towards honour-related violence against women (e.g., Haj-Yahia 2002; Vandello and Cohen 2003).

2) The influence of individualist versus collectivist culture on the perception of honour killing: in collectivist societies, violence against women is thought to be more likely than in individualist societies (Triandis 1995), but only a few studies have considered the dimension of individualism versus collectivism when investigating honour-related violence (but see Cihangir 2013). In the present study, the issue is the comparison between two cultures, Italy and Turkey, both traditionally known as honour cultures, but in which individualism and collectivism have, at least nowadays, different weights in shaping cultural norms and gender roles.

Honour-related violence against women

Violence against women is “*One of the most pervasive violations of human rights in all societies*” (World Health Organization [WHO] 2005, p. 3) and preventing this type of violence will contribute to achieving one of the priorities of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations (Garcia-Moreno and Watts 2011; WHO 2003, 2005).

Nowadays, there is indeed still a huge rate of violence against women (Garcia-Moreno and Watts 2011) and this is particularly true in the so-called *honour cultures* (Cihangir 2013; Sev'er 2005). Examples of these cultures are Mediterranean regions (e.g., Peristiany 1965; Rodriguez Mosquera et al. 2002), Middle East and Arab societies (e.g., Baldry et al. 2013; Uskul et al. 2012), and Latin American countries (e.g., Johnson and Lipsett-Rivera 1998; Nisbett and Cohen 1996). While in the Latin American countries the concept of honour in force is strongly linked to masculine honour (i.e., the man's reputation of strength and toughness: Leung and Cohen 2011; Nisbett and Cohen 1996; Vandello et al. 2009), in Mediterranean regions and Middle East and Arab societies, what is at

stake is mainly family honour (Van Osch et al. 2013), and it is this type of honour and its relation to violence against women that the present study will focus on.

In cultures where family honour is an important value, a man's honour is not only based upon his own moral integrity and on the reputation attributed to him for his virtues alone, but depends upon the preservation of the honour of the whole family, which, in turn, is strongly related to the chastity and morally appropriate behaviour of the female family members (Arnold 2001; George, as cited in Ishaq 2010; Ruggi 1998; Vandello and Cohen 2003, 2008). Honour norms dictate that a man has to protect his reputation (Vandello and Cohen 2003; Haj-Yahia, 2002), while the role of a woman is to maintain her man's and family's honour by behaving accordingly, regardless of whatever situation she is involved in (including rape and arranged or unhappy marriage): what really matters is only the responsibility the woman has in front of her community (Abu-Odeh 2000; Bağli and Sev'er 2003). Female chastity and fidelity are key values in such cultures and if they are violated, the man has to act urgently and in a decisive manner to protect the honour of himself and the whole family (Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001). Once that honour has been damaged by a woman's misbehaviour, the ways to restore it are to banish, to segregate, or, in extremis, to kill the guilty woman (Welchman and Hossain 2005).

The extreme solution of killing the guilty woman to preserve family honour is defined by Wikan, a social anthropologist and professor at the University of Oslo, as: "*A murder carried out as a commission from the extended family, to restore honor after the family has been dishonored. As a rule, the basic cause is a rumor that any female family member has behaved in an immoral way*" (Wikan, as cited in Baobaid and Hamed 2010, p. 25). Typically, the murderer is a male member of

the immediate or extended family (father, brother, uncle or grandfather of the dishonourable female family member) (Chesler 2010; Kulwicki 2002; Nasrullah et al. 2009). According to a survey from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA, Sadik 2000), the extreme solution of killing the “guilty” woman is still very widespread: about 5000 women were killed in the name of honour in the year 2000, but it is reasonable to assume that the registered cases are only the tip of the iceberg, since very often honour crimes are concealed by reporting the victim as missing or as having committed suicide (Chesler 2009; Coskun et al. 2012; Ilkkaracan 1998; Meeto and Mirza 2007; Solberg 2009).

As pointed out by Rodriguez Mosquera (2013), in order to design focused interventions and campaigns to eradicate this phenomenon, it is important to gather detailed information about the attitudes related to such crimes and the possible determinants of such attitudes.

Possible determinants of attitudes toward honour-related violence against women

As suggested above, men are generally more likely to commit and to endorse aggressive behaviours (for a review, see Frieze and Li 2010) and several studies (e.g., Cowan 2000; Gölge et al. 2003; Nayak et al. 2003; Sakall 2001; White and Kurpius 2002) suggest that gender is also a strong predictor of attitudes supporting different forms of violence against women. In particular, men are generally more likely than women to blame the victim, to attribute less responsibility to the assailant, to consider violent behaviours less serious, and to propose less severe punishments for the committed violence. Such a pattern of results was found when analysing the attitudes towards rape in U.S. college

students (Cowan 2000), in Turkish college students (Gölge et al. 2003), and in U.S. undergraduate students (White and Kurpius 2002) of both genders.

Furthermore, this pattern of results was found by Nayak et al. (2003) when analysing attitudes toward sexual assault and spousal physical violence in undergraduate students of both genders from India, Japan, Kuwait and the USA, and by Sakall (2001) when analysing attitudes towards wife-beating in Turkish college students of both genders.

With regard to honour-related violence, however, this general pattern of gender differences is less clear. While it is supported, for instance, by the study of Haj-Yahia (2005), who analysed the attitudes of Jordanian men towards wife abuse, or by the study of Haj-Yahia and Uysal (2008), in which the attitudes of male and female Turkish medical students about wife-beating were analysed, other studies on attitudes towards honour-related violence provide results that do not offer strong support for these gender differences. In particular, the study of Haj-Yahia (2002) showed that Jordanian women aged from 17 to 67 tended to justify wife-beating, to attribute great responsibility to the women when they are beaten, and to suggest mild, or even no, punishment for the assailant. Also, Vandello and Cohen (2003), who investigated the perception of violence of a husband against his wife in response to her infidelity in female and male students from Brazil, found no gender differences in respect of the idea that men can sometimes use violence and women should sometimes tolerate it.

The results of these two last studies, in which honour-related violence against women was analysed, indicate that the considered samples of men and women share the same social scripts and that women play an important role themselves in

transmitting social norms which facilitate crimes against women (Vandello and Cohen 2003).

Besides gender, research findings suggest that the individualist versus collectivist organization of a culture is another important predictor of attitudes toward honour-related violence against women (for a review, see Haj-Yahia and Sadan 2008). In individualist cultures, a person's identity is based on values such as autonomy, independence and uniqueness (Green et al. 2005). Expressing one's own opinion is respected, there is no strict self-monitoring of one's own behaviour (Zhang et al. 2013), and personal beliefs and values are considered as more important than group norms. In collectivist cultures, instead, the self is strictly connected to one's social image (Markus and Kitayama 1991) and "*a threat or disrespect to one's name or social image is a direct threat or disrespect to one's self-image*" (Guerra et al. 2013, p. 1273). Furthermore, people have to act in accordance with social norms, even if their personal beliefs significantly differ from the social ones (Zhang et al. 2013); harmony and respect are strongly emphasized and others' opinions and judgments are taken substantially into account (Fischer 1999). Within this framework, a woman's behaviour which threatens her family's honour is likely to be punished in order to re-establish reputation and reintegrate the family into social order and harmony, whereas it is plausible to assume that the re-establishment of family reputation is less urgent in a more individualist honour culture (Cihangir 2013).

Bearing in mind these considerations, the present study aims at providing a contribution to the analysis of male and female perceptions of honour killing in Italy and Turkey, two countries traditionally characterized by a culture in which family honour is an important value, but which differ in their degrees of

individualism and collectivism. In more detail, based on the above-cited studies, and in particular on the study of Gölge et al. (2003), the perception of honour killing in Italian and Turkish men and women will be analysed by assessing their attribution of victim and assailant responsibility, the punishment for the assailant they propose, and their evaluation of honour killing as a crime.

Italy and Turkey: Gender gap, family structure, legal system, social organization

Even though Italy and Turkey share important similarities, they also show dissimilarities which could contribute to giving rise to different perceptions about honour killings.

Regarding their similarities, Italy and Turkey both present important gender inequalities, as shown by the Gender Gap Index (Hausmann et al. 2012): Italy is at the 80th place in the worldwide classification of equal gender opportunities evaluated in 135 countries around the globe, and occupies the 35th position among the 44 countries of Europe and Central Asia considered; Turkey occupies the 124th position when considering all 135 countries and the lowest ranking in the Europe and Central Asia region.

Moreover, patriarchy had a significant role in the history of both cultures, although this type of social organization has developed differently in the two countries during the last few decades. The Italian family has been dominated for a long time by a male-centred cultural view (Cantarella 2010): families were characterized by a rigid hierarchical organization, were large (including also the extended family), and founded on marriage and a strict division of gender roles (Lombardi 2008). This traditional family system was dominant until the 1960s, when it began to be challenged by the growing influence of media and mass

culture, by the economic boom, the development of neo-feminism and an increase of individualism (Bimbi and Trifletti 2006). Nowadays, the Italian family is more nuclear and characterized by more flexible and equitable gender roles (Risè 2003; Volpi 2007; Zola 2003). Regarding Turkey, the society is still characterized by a rather patriarchal organization and presents important gender differences that reflect male dominance and power (Onur Ince et al. 2009; Sev'er 2005). The idea that it is the husband who has to provide for the family is still widespread, and early and/or forced marriages, bride price, and virginity testing continue to be quite common, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern rural areas (Alkan et al. 2002; Altınay and Arat 2009; Parla 2001; Sev'er 2005; Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001; World Organisation Against Torture [OMCT] 2003).

Also regarding the legal system, Italy and Turkey underwent similar developments with respect to the crime of honour killing. Up to 1981 when Article 442 of the penal code came into force, the Italian law, by Article 587, attributed a special status to this kind of crime providing for a reduction from 24 to 7 years in prison if a murder was committed in the name of honour (Basile 2010; Bettiga-Boukerbout, as cited in Ishaq 2010). With the entrance into law of Article 442, Article 587 was abrogated, and honour is no longer considered a mitigating circumstance in murder cases. Turkey has also promoted profound transformations of the legal system during the last few decades and made much greater efforts towards modernization, not at least in order to become a full member of the EU. Up to 2005, the Turkish Penal Code contemplated an increase of one third to one half of punishment for crimes involving family members with the exception for honour crimes, for which punishment could be reduced by one-eighth. As reported by Livaneli (2006) on the website of the Turkish Cultural Foundation (<http://www.turkishculture.org/lifestyles/turkish-culture-portal/the->

women/honor-killings-426.htm), with the introduction of the New Penal Code in 2005, honour killings are considered as voluntary homicides and are punished with life imprisonment, with no possible reduction, and family members who encourage another member to commit homicide or suicide are also punished. Besides these similarities, nowadays Italy and Turkey differ with respect to the individualist versus collectivist structure of their societies. The Italian culture has become essentially individualist during the last few decades (Bimbi and Trifletti 2006), whereas Turkey is still characterized by a collectivist structure. According to Diener et al. (1995), on a scale from 1 (most collectivist) to 10 (most individualist), Italy scores 6, whereas Turkey obtains a score of 4. The more recent study by Basabe et al. (2002) confirms these differences between the two countries for individualism: Italy scores 76 out of 100, whereas Turkey scores 37. In order to describe in more detail the implications of these differences, we report the comments of the Hofstede Center on the national scores of individualism of Italy and Turkey:

At a score of 76 Italy is an Individualistic culture, “me” centered, especially in the big and rich cities of the North where people can feel alone even in the middle of a big and busy crowd. [...]For Italians having their own personal ideas and objectives in life is very motivating and the route to happiness is through personal fulfillment. (Hofstede Center 2014a, “Individualism”)

Turkey, with a score of 37 is a collectivistic society. This means that the “We” is important, people belong to in-groups (families, clans or organisations) who look after each other in exchange for loyalty. Communication is indirect and the harmony of the group has to be

maintained, open conflicts are avoided. (Hofstede Center 2014b, “Individualism”)

The differences in the individualist versus collectivist social organization of Italy and Turkey, as well as the differences in the dominant family structures in the two countries, offer possible explanations for the respective conceptions of honour.

The concept of honour in Turkey and in Italy

In Turkey, the concept of honour has many different facets and there are several different terms which refer to honour. Among them, the one which mostly corresponds to the concept of masculine honour is *Seref*, which is associated with personal, especially male, honour, with courage and loyalty (Ermer, as cited in Van Osch et al. 2013), with “*the glory derived from a man’s own or one’s male kin’s accomplishments*” (Abou-Zeid, as cited in Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001, p. 972).

Another term referring to honour is *Namus*, a type of sexual honour (Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001), which is strongly related to family honour (Van Osch et al. 2013), and which is of great importance in the Turkish society (Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001). It is indeed in the framework of the collectivist structure of Turkey that the weight of the concept of *Namus* and its relation with honour-related violence against women could find an explanation (Cihangir 2013). In Turkey, male honour continues to be strongly related to *Namus* (Kardam 2005; Kogacioglu 2004), mainly incarnated by the female family members’ chastity and by the men’s capacity to preserve it. The man is responsible for his woman’s *Namus*, and therefore for his own. This is a group value: for better or worse, the whole family or village will benefit from the *Namus* of one of its members and will suffer from shame for the loss of *Namus* of another member. Wives and daughters have to show respect by maintaining their *Namus* intact. When *Namus*

is lost (*kaybetmek*), it becomes necessary to purify it (*namusunu temizlemek*): “a threat to the *namus* encourages the man to act in defence of their “honour.”

When namus has been lost by unchaste conduct, it can only be restored by killing its offender” (OMCT 2003, p. 352). This also explains why neighbourhood pressure (*mahalle baskısı*) still has great power in Turkey and is continuously monitored in Turkish society (van Eck 2003). Gossip and neighbourhood pressure can still be good reasons, as good as proven adultery, for honour killing (Glazer and Ras 1994; van Eck 2003). Indeed, the more the loss of honour is publicly assumed and shared, the more the killing is likely, because of the high pressure from the community, which isolates and ridicules the dishonoured family; in this case, killing the guilty woman is the only way for the family to be again accepted by the community (van Eck 2003).

By contrast, although Italy is traditionally considered an honour culture (Helkama et al. 2013; Uskul et al. 2012), its high scoring for individualism may account for a gradual transformation of the concept of honour, which actually is centred more on self-enhancement, moral integrity and personal responsibility for one’s own actions (Cihangir 2013). Personal opinions about oneself are becoming more important than external values and reinforcements, so gossiping and neighbourhood pressure are becoming less relevant (Wikan 2008), especially in regions where individualism is more rooted, such as in the big Northern cities (as highlighted by the Hofstede Center data cited above). This tendency is also confirmed by the Italian dictionary, which defines “honour” as a good reputation obtained through honesty and dignity, adding that “*in societies where premarital or extramarital sexual relations are considered ignominious, a woman’s honour and consequently her husband’s and family’s honour depend upon the fact that she does not have such relations*” (translated from Garzanti Linguistica online

2014), suggesting that in modern Italian society this conception of honour is no longer customary.

Aims and hypotheses

To investigate the effects of gender and individualist versus collectivist culture on the attitudes towards honour killing, questionnaires were distributed to Italian and Turkish university students living in two big cities (Turin, in north-western Italy, and Istanbul) to assess their evaluations of three different honour killing scenarios. In the first scenario, a husband kills his wife because of assumed adultery (alleged adultery). In the second, 3 years after their arranged marriage, a husband kills his wife because he receives a hint about her extramarital liaison (adultery). In the third, the husband in a happily married couple discovers his wife in the act of sexual intercourse with her secret lover (adultery *in flagrante delicto*). Scenarios have been created by varying the degree of victim blameworthiness and publicity of adultery. The adulteries described in the three scenarios, in fact, present an increasing level of victim blameworthiness and a decreasing degree of publicity from scenarios 1 to 3. More detailed descriptions of the scenarios are provided in the Method section.

By assessing the perceptions of Turkish and Italian men and women about these three scenarios, we aimed at testing the following two hypotheses:

- 1) Although the literature offers contrasting results regarding gender differences in the attitudes towards honour-related crimes (Haj-Yahia 2002, 2005; Haj-Yahia and Uysal 2008; Vandello and Cohen 2003), on the basis of the evidence that generally men are more supportive of any type of violence than women (Frieze and Li 2010), and the results of empirical studies investigating attitudes towards different forms of violence against

women (Cowan 2000; Gölge et al. 2003; Haj-Yahia 2005; Haj-Yahia and Uysal 2008; Nayak et al. 2003; Sakall 2001; Sakalli-Uğurlu et al. 2007; White and Kurpius 2002), we expected that men would attribute more responsibility to the victim and less to the assailant than women, that they would propose less severe punishments for the assailant than women and that they would be more prone than women to assert that no crime happened.

- 2) Even if both Italy and Turkey are traditionally considered honour cultures, given the more collectivist social structure of Turkey (Hofstede Center 2014b) and the importance of the family honour-related concept of *Namus* in Turkish society (Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001), we expected that Turkish compared with Italian participants would attribute more responsibility to the wife and less to the husband, propose less severe punishments for the assailant and be more prone to assert that no crime happened.

Method

Participants

Participants were 96 Turkish and 68 Italian university students living in Istanbul and Turin (northwest Italy). The main demographic characteristics of the men and women of each country are reported in Table 1. While gender proportions did not differ significantly in the two groups, $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 0.78, p = .376$, the Italian sample was significantly older than the Turkish sample, $F(1, 160) = 81.82, p < .001$. Within countries no gender differences for age were observed: Italy, $F(1, 66) = 0.56, p = .457$; Turkey, $F(1, 91) = 1.81, p = .187$. Regarding religion, proportions significantly differed between the two countries, $\chi^2(1, N = 164) =$

130.63, $p < .001$. Within countries no gender differences were observed: Italy, $\chi^2(1, N = 68) = 0.08, p = .772$; Turkey, $\chi^2(1, N = 96) = 0.191, p = .662$.

Materials

Following the general structure of the questionnaire used by Gölge et al. (2003), we created a questionnaire which entailed the three honour killing scenarios and the questions reported below. The names of the female protagonists of the scenarios varied for the Italian and the Turkish versions of the questionnaire. The whole questionnaire was first written in Italian, and then translated into Turkish using the back translation technique by two bilingual students.

Scenario 1: Honour killing for alleged adultery.

Francesca/Gizem, aged 30, married, after many years sees again an old male friend from high school. The two friends meet frequently in the evenings to go to the cinema or talk. Around this friendship people begin to gossip and to make insinuations. After some ironic jokes, the husband asks his wife to stop meeting her friend, but she refuses. Holding that the wife is behaving dishonourably towards himself and the family, he kills her.

Scenario 2: Honour killing for adultery.

Anna/Nur, aged 31, was married for three years to a man she never loved, but towards whom she had been forced by her family, who considered him a good match. Unsatisfied and frustrated by her marriage, she establishes an intimate relationship with another man. The husband receives a hint about this relationship and in order to wipe out the offence against himself and the family he kills his wife.

Scenario 3: Honour killing for adultery *in flagrante delicto*.

Erica/Deniz, aged 28, has been happily married for three years when she becomes infatuated with a man with whom she embarks on a secret affair for several months. One evening, her husband returns from work sooner than usual and discovers the two lovers on the sofa having sexual intercourse without being seen himself by them. Completely upset, he closes the door and cruises through the city. Some hours later, he returns home and, to wipe out the offence against himself and the family, kills his wife.

The scenarios were created in order to vary victim blameworthiness, which increases from scenario 1 to 3, and publicity, which decreases from scenario 1 to 3. To vary victim blameworthiness, the first scenario describes a wife who meets an old friend from time to time, but there is no information that allows one to conclude that adultery really happened; in scenario 2, the wife actually has an extramarital relation but there is the mitigating circumstance that her marriage was arranged and unhappy; in scenario 3, the wife has an extramarital relation and, what is more, her marriage was happy. To vary publicity, in the first scenario it is explicitly said that people begin to gossip about the wife's meetings; in the second, there is somebody who suggests to the husband that his wife is having a relationship with another man; in the third, the extramarital affair is secret.

Each of the three scenarios was followed by four questions assessing: 1) the responsibility attributed to the victim (0 = not at all responsible to 4 = totally responsible); 2) the responsibility attributed to the assailant (0 = not at all responsible to 4 = totally responsible); 3) the punishment considered appropriate (1 = no punishment, 2 = fine rather than prison, 3 = 1-7 years in prison, 4 = 8-15 years in prison, 5 = 16-20 years in prison, 6 = more than 20 years in prison); 4) whether or not a crime has been committed (yes/no).

Finally, participants had to provide the following personal data: gender, age, nationality and religion.

Procedure

A trained research assistant distributed questionnaires to students frequenting Turin University in Italy and Istanbul University in Turkey. In both countries, participants were recruited in university libraries, study halls and cafeterias.

The research assistant explained the aims of the study and distributed the questionnaire to the students who consented to participate (94 % in Italy, 86.5 % in Turkey). Each participant answered the four questions for each of the three scenarios. Scenarios were presented in the same order to all the participants, from scenario 1 to scenario 3. Completion of the questionnaire took about 15 minutes. All participants were informed that the questionnaire was anonymous and that data would be used for research purposes only.

Results

Table 2 reports the means and standard deviations for attributed victim and assailant responsibility, and proposed punishment for the assailant, for each scenario. As the table shows, although rather low, the responsibility attributed to the victim increased from scenario 1 to 3. This was especially true for Turkish participants, but Italian participants also showed the same tendency. Conversely, the responsibility attributed to the assailant decreased from scenario 1 to 3 and this trend was more pronounced for Turkish participants, especially among men. Similarly the severity of punishment proposed decreased from scenario 1 to 3. Again, this trend was more pronounced for Turkish participants, especially among men.

--- Insert Table 2 about here ---

A 3 (scenario) x 2 (gender) x 2 (culture) mixed ANOVA was computed to assess the effects of scenario (within subjects factor), and of gender and culture (between subjects factors), on victim responsibility, assailant responsibility and proposed punishment for the assailant.

Results showed a main effect of scenario, $F(6, 155) = 56.11, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .685$.

More precisely, scenario had a significant effect on attributed victim responsibility, $F(2, 320) = 173.44, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .520$, and assailant responsibility, $F(2, 320) = 21.46, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .118$, and on proposed punishment, $F(2, 320) = 20.93, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .116$. As revealed by Bonferroni post-hoc tests, the attribution of responsibility to the victim increased significantly from scenario 1 (alleged adultery) to 2 (adultery), and from scenario 2 (adultery) to 3 (adultery *in flagrante delicto*). Conversely, assailant responsibility decreased significantly from scenario 1 to 2, and from scenario 2 to 3, and proposed punishment was significantly lower for scenario 3 (adultery *in flagrante delicto*) than for scenarios 1 and 2 (Table 3). These results suggest that the variation of victim blameworthiness had the expected effect, while the effect of the variation of event publicity is less clear. We will comment about this result in more detail in the discussion.

--- Insert Table 3 about here ---

Disconfirming our first hypothesis regarding the existence of gender differences in the perception of the honour killing scenarios, the main effect of gender was not significant, $F(3, 158) = 0.79, p = .504$. Across scenarios and regardless of culture, men did not attribute more responsibility to the victim, less responsibility to the assailant or propose less severe punishment than women.

On the contrary, as expected by hypothesis 2, there was a main effect of culture, $F(3, 158) = 18.39, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .259$. Across scenarios and regardless of gender,

Turkish participants attributed more responsibility to the victim ($EMM = 2.28$, $ESD = 0.11$) than Italian participants ($EMM = 1.07$, $ESD = 0.14$), $F(1, 160) = 48.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .233$, less responsibility to the assailant ($EMM = 3.17$, $ESD = 0.09$) than Italian participants ($EMM = 3.83$, $ESD = 0.11$), $F(1, 160) = 22.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .123$, and proposed less severe punishments ($EMM = 4.72$, $ESD = 0.10$) than Italian participants ($EMM = 5.59$, $ESD = 0.12$), $F(1, 160) = 30.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .162$.

Furthermore, an interaction between gender and culture was observed, $F(3, 158) = 6.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .110$. This interaction was significant for the attribution of assailant responsibility, $F(1, 160) = 12.56$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .073$, and punishment, $F(1, 160) = 8.36$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .050$. Bonferroni post-hoc tests showed that, whereas in Italy there were no gender differences in the attribution of assailant responsibility and punishment, Turkish men attributed less responsibility to the assailant and less severe punishments than Turkish women (Table 4).

--- Insert Table 4 about here ---

Additionally, there was an interaction between scenario and culture, $F(6, 155) = 2.17$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .077$, which was significant for assailant responsibility, $F(2, 320) = 4.99$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .043$, and punishment, $F(2, 320) = 3.46$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .033$. Bonferroni post-hoc tests showed that whereas the attribution of assailant responsibility and punishment decreased only slightly across scenarios for the Italian participants, the judgments of Turkish participants decreased more markedly from scenario 1 (alleged adultery) to 3 (adultery *in flagrante*) (Table 5).

--- Insert Table 5 about here ---

Finally, results revealed a three-way interaction between scenario, gender and culture, $F(6, 155) = 3.13$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .108$, which was significant for the attribution of victim responsibility, $F(2, 320) = 5.98$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .036$. Contrasts

were used to analyse in more depth this three-way interaction. The first contrast revealed a significant difference between men's and women's attribution of victim responsibility when scenarios 1 (alleged adultery) and 3 (adultery *in flagrante delicto*) and the two cultures were compared, $F(1, 160) = 10.04, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .059$. As shown in Figure 1, for both, Italian men and women, attribution of victim responsibility is very low for alleged adultery and increases only slightly for adultery *in flagrante delicto*. Turkish men and women agree in attributing a rather high responsibility to the victim in the case of adultery *in flagrante delicto*, whereas Turkish women compared to Turkish men attribute less responsibility to the victim in the case of alleged adultery. The second contrast, comparing men's and women's responses from the two cultures to scenarios 3 (adultery *in flagrante delicto*) and 2 (adultery), was not significant.

--- Insert Fig. 1 about here ---

Regarding the question of whether or not a crime took place, no Italian participant answered "no", whereas some Turkish, and especially male, participants, gave this answer (Table 6). Overall, for scenario 1, 7.3 % of the Turkish participants evaluated that no crime has been committed, and for scenarios 2 and 3, 8.3 % of them made the same assertion. Although these results support, at least at a descriptive level, hypothesis 2, and suggest that within the Turkish sample there are gender differences which point towards hypothesis 1, given the small number or absence of observations in some cells, no Chi-square tests were computed to assess the statistical significance of these distributions.

--- Insert Table 6 about here ---

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of gender and culture on the perception of honour killing in two different countries, both traditionally considered honour cultures but one nowadays more individualist and the other more collectivist: Italy and Turkey.

Similarly to previous studies on violence against women (e.g. Nayak et al. 2003), participants' culture influenced the perception of honour killing. In particular, Turkish participants attributed more responsibility to the victim and less to the assailant and also proposed less severe punishments for the assailant than Italian participants. Moreover, the attribution of responsibility to the assailant and the severity of proposed punishment decreased more for Turkish than for Italian participants from scenario 1 (alleged adultery) to scenario 3 (adultery in *flagrante delicto*).

With regard to the literature debate about gender differences in the attribution of responsibility to the assailant and to the victim (Ben-David and Schneider 2005; Cowan 2000; Gölge et al. 2003; Haj-Yahia 2002; Vandello and Cohen 2003; White and Kurpius 2002), in the present study gender becomes relevant only when considered within a specific culture: Turkish male participants attributed less responsibility to the assailant and they proposed less severe punishments than Turkish women. This interaction between gender and culture could be explained by social beliefs and cultural ideologies, especially by the family honour-related concept of *Namus* which is still very important in the rather collectivist Turkish culture, and which asserts male dominance over women and shapes both men's and women's attitudes (Flood and Pease 2009).

Actually, the observed effects of culture and gender could be considered as quite unexpected, if we only consider the fact that traditionally Italy and Turkey are

both honour cultures; however, these effects find an explanation when we look at the different types of social organization, collectivist versus individualist, and the respective different conceptions of honour. In Turkey, a more collectivistic country, avoiding social marginalization is fundamental for the men and their families; therefore, extreme reactions are more likely to be justified if a woman ridicules her family, its *Namus* - even if only by provoking gossip - with inappropriate behaviours. On the contrary, especially in the big cities of Northern Italy, family honour became less important in recent decades, whereas, congruent with increasing individualism (Martella and Maass 2000), personal honour became a more important value.

Furthermore, at least partially, our results could be an expression of the contradictions and difficulties Turkish society encounters on its path towards modernization and gender equality (Altınay and Arat 2009; Pervizat 2006; Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001). One finding which could reflect these contradictions and difficulties emerged from the analysis of the effects of the different scenarios considered in interaction with gender and culture: although men and women of both countries attributed more responsibility to the victim, going from alleged adultery to adultery in *flagrante delicto*, Turkish women attributed less responsibility to the victim in the case of alleged adultery compared to their male counterparts. This result was quite unexpected, given some findings in the literature reporting a strong tendency in honour cultures of women themselves to justify violence against women and to blame the victim (e.g. the above cited studies of Haj-Yahia 2002, and Vandello and Cohen 2003, conducted in Jordan and Brazil respectively). Since our participants were young adults with a high level of education, living in a big modern city, this result could be a sign of the

fact that, at least in this subsample of the Turkish population, women are changing their minds and are less willing to accept the consequences of unjustified gossip. Finally, the present study explored whether the incidents described in the three scenarios would be evaluated as a crime or not. Results showed that all the Italian participants affirmed that a crime has been committed in each of the three scenarios, while a minority of Turkish participants considered that no crime had been committed. Also this result might be interpreted in light of a collectivist honour culture that claims the importance of maintaining a good reputation in front of the community, accepting (although not at a legal level) extreme behaviours by men to re-establish family honour when it is damaged.

Limitations of the present study

It should be pointed out that in the present study it was not possible to differentiate possible effects of religion from the effects of culture, since most Italian participants were Catholics and most Turkish participants were Muslims. As evidenced by Korteweg and Yurdakul (2010), in the scientific literature there is a huge debate about the role of religion in the genesis of honour killings. In particular, the issue of the debate is whether honour killings can be accounted for more by the Islamic religion or by the oppressive practices related to the undisputed authority of the patriarch which puts the woman in a subordinated position within the family, as well as within society (Chesler 2009, 2010; Douki et al. 2003; Ishaq 2010; Sev'er 2005; Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001). In future research, it would be important to address this question in more detail, for example by comparing two patriarchal cultures, one where the dominant religion is Islamism, the other where the dominant religion is Catholicism. Furthermore, it would be

important to assess in both cultures the degree of religiosity of the participants, since, at least in Italy, not all Catholics are very religious and observant.

Another limitation of the present study is that we did not directly measure the collectivist versus individualist attitude of our participants, since we considered that there is enough empirical evidence indicating that Italy is more individualist while Turkey is more collectivist (Hofstede Center 2014a, 2014b). Nonetheless, given the huge transformations the two countries underwent in recent decades, the possible differences between the attitudes of people living in rural regions and big cities, and, most importantly, the possible differences of attitudes between generations, in future research it would be worthwhile to assess the individualist versus collectivist attitudes of the participants involved.

Another methodological limitation of the study concerns the contents of the three scenarios. We intended to manipulate two different variables, event publicity and victim blameworthiness, assuming that both of them could be relevant in provoking different responses from participants belonging to more collectivist versus more individualist honour cultures. The simultaneous manipulation of these two variables, however, prevented us from disentangling precisely how much of the ratings depended on attributed victim blameworthiness and how much on event publicity. In fact, results suggest that the variations in the three scenarios had the expected effect of producing an increasing perception of victim blameworthiness from scenario 1 to 3, whereas the influence of the degree of event publicity remained rather unclear, with the exception of the three-way interaction between scenario, gender and culture, which suggests that Turkish women are less prone than Turkish men to attribute responsibility to the victim when a honour crime is mainly due to conjectures and gossip about a presumed adultery. In addition, in order to increase the perception of victim

blameworthiness from scenario 1 to 3, we chose to specify that the wife was forced into an arranged marriage in scenario 2, whereas the couple was “happily married” in scenario 3. In future research it would be necessary to create scenarios in which only one variable at a time - either victim blameworthiness or publicity of the event - is manipulated, by taking care that other variables remain as stable as possible.

Finally, the sample of the present study is not representative of the perception of honour killing of the entire Italian and Turkish societies, since participants were exclusively young university students living in two big cities. In future research, it would be interesting to consider a more representative sample including different age groups and participants from different socio-economic situations and origins (as the literature shows, in fact rural communities can be more affected by the traditional concept of family honour, both in Italy and in Turkey: Altınay and Arat 2009; Tager and Good 2005).

Conclusion

In this study, we observed significant effects of gender and culture on the perception of honour killing. Turkish participants attributed more responsibility to the victims and less responsibility to the assailants and proposed less severe punishments for the assailant than Italian participants. Moreover, Turkish men attributed less responsibility to the assailant and proposed less severe punishments than Turkish women. Finally, whereas Italian participants always considered that what happened in the described scenario was a crime, a few Turkish participants affirmed that no crime happened. These results suggest that although laws have changed in both countries and are rather similar in condemning honour killing, the attitudes toward this kind of crime are more indulgent among Turkish participants

than among Italian participants. This could be related to the role played by collectivism and individualism in the two countries: Turkish *Namus* is deeply rooted in a collectivist social organization, which promotes complete adherence to social norms and respect for established gender roles, whereas in the more individualist Northern Italy the concept of honour is more centred on personal values and gender roles are more flexible. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that Turkish women attributed less responsibility to the victim in the case of alleged adultery. This could be an important sign that at least the Turkish women of our sample are beginning to adopt a more critical point of view about violence against women, especially when it is mostly due to gossiping.

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Table 1 Main demographic characteristics of the participants of each country

Country	Gender	N		Age		Religion		
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	M ^a (%)	C ^b (%)	A ^c (%)
Italy	Men	23	33.8	24.4	1.2	0.0	60.9	39.1
	Women	45	66.2	24.7	2.0	0.0	64.4	35.6
	Total	68	100	24.6	1.8	0.0	63.2	36.8
Turkey	Men	39	40.6	21.6	2.6	84.6	0.0	15.4
	Women	57	59.4	21.0	2.2	87.7	0.0	12.3
	Total	96	100	21.3	2.4	86.5	0.0	13.5

Note. ^a Muslims, ^b Roman Catholics, ^c Atheists

Table 2 Means and standard deviations for victim responsibility, assailant responsibility and punishment in the three scenarios

Measure	Culture	Gender	Alleged adultery		Adultery		Adultery <i>in flagrante</i>	
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Victim responsibility ^a	Italy	Men	0.35	0.57	1.35	1.37	1.87	1.49
		Women	0.36	0.80	0.82	0.83	1.67	1.31
	Turkey	Men	1.69	1.44	2.44	1.47	3.05	1.36
		Women	1.07	1.10	2.39	1.32	3.04	1.09
Assailant responsibility ^a	Italy	Men	4.00	0.00	3.96	0.21	3.78	0.60
		Women	3.87	0.63	3.77	0.70	3.58	0.99
	Turkey	Men	3.28	1.38	2.72	1.45	2.31	1.47
		Women	3.78	0.67	3.53	0.91	3.40	1.02
Punishment ^b	Italy	Men	5.83	0.49	5.70	0.64	5.52	0.73
		Women	5.60	0.65	5.62	0.61	5.29	0.87
	Turkey	Men	4.75	1.57	4.42	1.41	3.89	1.53
		Women	5.36	1.09	5.18	1.14	4.72	1.39

Notes. ^a 0 = not at all responsible, 4 = totally responsible

^b 1 = no punishment, 2 = fine rather than prison, 3 = 1-7 years in prison, 4 = 8-15 years in prison, 5 = 16-20 years in prison, 6 = more than 20 years in prison.

Table 3 Differences between estimated marginal means for victim responsibility, assailant responsibility and punishment by scenario

Measure	Alleged Adultery (AA)		Adultery (A)		Adultery <i>in flagrante</i> (AF)		Differences between means ^a
	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	
Victim resp. ^b	0.87	0.09	1.75	0.10	2.41	0.11	AA<A<AF
Assailant resp. ^b	3.73	0.07	3.49	0.08	3.27	0.09	AA>A>AF
Punishment ^c	5.39	0.09	5.23	0.09	4.86	0.10	AA>AF, A>AF

Notes. ^a Means differ significantly at $p < .05$ in Bonferroni post-hoc tests

^b 0 = not at all responsible, 4 = totally responsible

^c 1 = no punishment, 2 = fine rather than prison, 3 = 1-7 years in prison, 4 = 8-15 years in prison, 5 = 16-20 years in prison, 6 = more than 20 years in prison

Table 4 Differences between estimated marginal means for assailant responsibility and punishment by gender and culture

Measure	Men (M)		Women (W)		Differences between means ^a
	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	
Assailant resp.^b					
Italy	3.91	0.17	3.74	0.13	
Turkey	2.78	0.13	3.57	0.11	M<W
Punishment^c					
Italy	5.68	0.20	5.50	0.14	
Turkey	4.36	0.15	5.09	0.13	M<W

Notes. ^a Means differ significantly at $p < .05$ in Bonferroni post-hoc tests

^b 0 = not at all responsible, 4 = totally responsible

^c 1 = no punishment, 2 = fine rather than prison, 3 = 1-7 years in prison, 4 = 8-15 years in prison, 5 = 16-20 years in prison, 6 = more than 20 years in prison

Table 5 Differences between estimated marginal means for assailant responsibility and punishment by scenario and culture

Measure	Alleged Adultery (AA)		Adultery (A)		Adultery <i>in flagrante</i> (AF)		Differences between means ^a
	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>ESD</i>	
Assailant resp.^b							
Italy	3.93	0.11	3.86	0.12	3.68	0.14	AA>AF
Turkey	3.53	0.09	3.12	0.10	2.86	0.11	AA>A>AF
Punishment^c							
Italy	5.71	0.14	5.66	0.13	5.41	0.16	AA>AF, A>AF
Turkey	5.06	0.11	4.80	0.11	4.31	0.13	AA>A>AF

Notes. ^a Means differ significantly at $p < .05$ in Bonferroni post-hoc tests

^b 0 = not at all responsible, 4 = totally responsible

^c 1 = no punishment, 2 = fine rather than prison, 3 = 1-7 years in prison, 4 = 8-15 years in prison, 5 = 16-20 years in prison, 6 = more than 20 years in prison

Table 6 Number of men and women of the two countries who affirmed that no crime has been committed

	Italy		Turkey	
	M ($n = 23$)	W ($n = 45$)	M ($n = 39$)	W ($n = 57$)
Scenario 1	0	0	5	2
Scenario 2	0	0	6	2
Scenario 3	0	0	6	2

Note. M = men, W = women

Fig. 1 The scenario by culture by gender interaction for men (top) and women (bottom) for the attribution of victim responsibility

