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A Kicking and Care Taking: Masculine Honor Beliefs and Individuals' Priorities in Socializing Children**

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A** KICKING AND CARE TAKING

The motion picture *American Sniper* (Eastwood, 2015) is an autobiographical film that portrays US Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle’s life from boyhood to death. In an early scene, Chris’s father teaches his two sons life lessons on how they are expected to behave:

There are three types of people in the world: sheep, wolves, and sheepdogs. Some people prefer to believe that evil doesn’t exist in the world. If there were ever dark on their doorsteps, they wouldn’t know how to protect themselves. Those are the sheep. And then you’ve got the predators, who use violence to prey on the weak. Those are the wolves. And then there are those that are blessed with the gift of aggression, with an overpowering need to protect the flock. These men are the rare breed who live to confront the wolf. They are the sheepdogs.

Taking off his belt and placing it on the table, the father continues: *We’re not raising any sheep in this family. And I will whoop your ass if you turn into a wolf. But we protect our own.*” The father’s message to his sons is clear. He will not raise individuals that cannot protect themselves or who prey on the weak. They must be able to defend themselves and defend their own from threat or provocation.

Masculine honor, the focus of the current work, contends that aggression is sometimes appropriate, justifiable and even necessary, especially when used as a response to provocation and/or in the protection of others. Masculine honor ideology, characterized in cultures of honor, like that in the American South, has more recently been examined as an individual difference variable (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012a; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002; Saucier et al., 2016; Vandello, Cohen, Grandon, & Franiuk, 2009). Higher levels of masculine honor beliefs have been shown to be associated with more negative and aggressive responses to deter and retaliate against various forms of insult, threat, and provocation (Barnes et al., 2012a; O’Dea, Castro Bueno, & Saucier, 2017; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2002; Saucier, O’Dea, & Stratmoen, in press; Saucier et al., 2016, Saucier, Till, Miller, O’Dea, & Andres, 2015; Stratmoen, Greer, Martens, & Saucier, 2018).

What has yet to be studied is how masculine honor beliefs are taught to individuals. In the seminal literature, Nisbett (1993) hypothesized that if violence were necessary for adults, then this expectation would be conveyed to children through parental socialization. As such, we are creating a program of research to examine how masculine honor beliefs relate to the way individuals socialize children. Overall, we expect that higher levels of masculine honor beliefs will be related to perceiving it as important to socialize children to defend and protect themselves from threat. However, we also predict that there will be gender differences for how women and men expect to raise sons and daughters. Specifically, we expect that men higher in masculine honor beliefs will be more concerned with teaching sons than daughters on how to defend themselves and with teaching daughters, rather than sons, to avoid sexual promiscuity. We also predict that men higher in masculine honor beliefs will perceive that they have more of a role in socializing sons than daughters. As such, we predict men higher in masculine honor beliefs will expect that women take on the primarily role of socializing children, especially when it comes to teaching daughters to “act like a lady.” To do this, we designed two studies to examine the relationship between masculine honor beliefs and individuals’ beliefs about what life lessons are important to teach children about being a man and about being a woman.

STUDY 1

Participants: We had 195 individuals (93 women, 99 men, 1 gender queer/gender non-conforming, and two who indicated other or I’d rather not say) participate in taking a short survey. Participants were primarily White (58%) with an average age of 25.56 (*SD* = 10.29). The majority of the participants indicated that they did not have children (76.5%), but the majority (63.0%) also indicated they wanted children in the future.

STUDY 1

Materials & Procedure: Trained undergraduate research assistants approached individuals to take a short (1 page front and back) paper survey. The survey included a short demographics and four free response questions asking participants about how they would like to raise their children (i.e., *I want to teach my daughter(s) of future daughter(s) to, I want to teach my sons(s) or future son(s) to, What are the top 5 life lessons you want to teach your daughter(s) or future daughter(s) about being a woman? What are the top 5 life lessons you want to teach your son(s) or future son(s) about being a man?*). The free response questions were counterbalanced so that half our participants answered about daughters first and the other half answered about sons first.

Our survey also included a shortened version (i.e., 7 items, 1 item from each of the subscales) of the Masculine Honor Beliefs Scale (MHBS; Saucier et al., 2016;). This scale was designed to incorporate the factors previously associated with the culture of honor as it exists in the American South (see Saucier et al., 2016; see also Cohen, 1998; Cohen & Nisbett, 1997; Cohen et al., 1996; Cohen et al., 1998; Nisbett, 1993). The seven factors are masculine courage (*It is very important for a man to act bravely*), pride in manhood (*It is important for a man to be more masculine than other men*), socialization (*If your son got into a fight, you would be proud that he stood up for himself*), virtue (*You would praise a man who reacted aggressively to an insult*), protection (*A man should do whatever it takes to protect his wife because it is the right thing to do*), provocation/insult (*If a man’s wife is insulted, his manhood is insulted*), and family and community bonds (*It is important to spend time with the members of your family*).

Results: To analyze our data, we first examined the free responses given by our participants on what they felt would be important to teach their son(s) and daughter(s) or future son(s) and daughter(s). We examined the data for trends and developed categories (e.g., *Defending/Protecting Self, Defending/Protecting Others, Caring for Others, Respecting Self & Others, Athletic, Moral/Religious*), from these trends for both son(s) and daughter(s).

From our initial examination of the responses, we believe that there is a gender difference on a few categories. For example, when it comes to defense/protection of self and others, we noticed that both defense/protection of self and others were frequently mentioned for sons (e.g., *stand up for the little guy, stick up for themselves, protect women, protect your family*), but defense/protection of others was rarely mentioned for women while defense of self was mentioned frequently (e.g., *stick up for herself, self-defense*). Importantly, participants did mention that women should “care” for others (e.g., *take care of* or *care for* others), but not to protect or defend them. We also noticed that while mentions of moral behavior were made for both sons and daughters, individuals mentioned behaving honestly and with integrity with regards to sons (e.g., *be honest, have integrity*), while they mentioned avoiding sexual impropriety for daughters (e.g., *Don’t expose yourself for money, no matter what., Modest is hottest*). Also, consistent with hypotheses, we found some evidence for our prediction that men would expect their wives or partner to hold the primary role of socializing their children, especially their daughters (*e.g., Hopefully, I don’t have to do this. Model herself after her mom*).

Our next step will be to more formally code the items (a strenuous and lengthy process that involves sorting all of the ~3,500 response items into categories) so that we may examine them in relation to the shortened Masculine Honor Beliefs Scale.

STUDY 2

Using the General Psychology participation pool at Kansas State University, we are currently collecting data in which participants are completing a survey that contains demographic items, the MHBS (Saucier et al., 2016), and questions pertaining to socializing children. As such, instead of having participants respond to free response items similar to those used in like in Study 1, participants in our current study are answering questions on Likert-type scales.

STUDY 2

More specifically, we are having participants rate questions related to the importance of teaching various lessons (e.g., *It is important for me to teach my son/daughter to defend himself/herself, It is important for me to teach my son/daughter to care for others*) to children using 1 (*Not at all important*) to 9 (*Very important*) scales. Finally, we are having participants take the full MHBS (Saucier et. Al., 2016) which includes 35 items and seven subscales so we can analyze which lessons are most important to those higher on the MHBS. We expect to find that individuals with greater adherence to masculine honor beliefs will find it of more importance to teach sons, as compared to daughters, how to defend/protect others, whereas they would find it of more importance to teach daughters, as compared to sons, how to care for others. Given the topic of our study, future research will collect data from participants using Amazon’s TurkPrime software (Litman, Robinson, & Abberbock, 2016). This software will allow us to collect data from participants with a wider range of characteristics (e.g., life experiences, age) than what is available to us through other data collection methods (e.g., general psychology students, clipboard studies).

Expected Results:

Table 1: *Expected Correlations between MHBS and Teaching Son(s)*

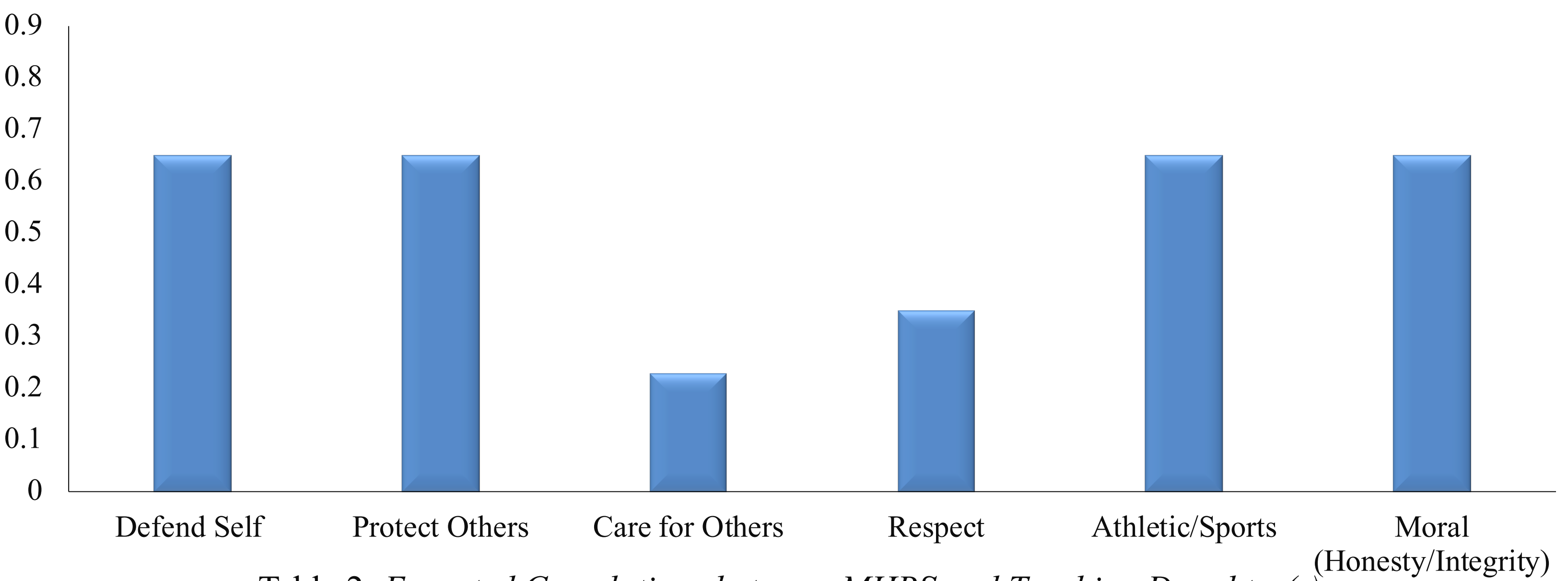
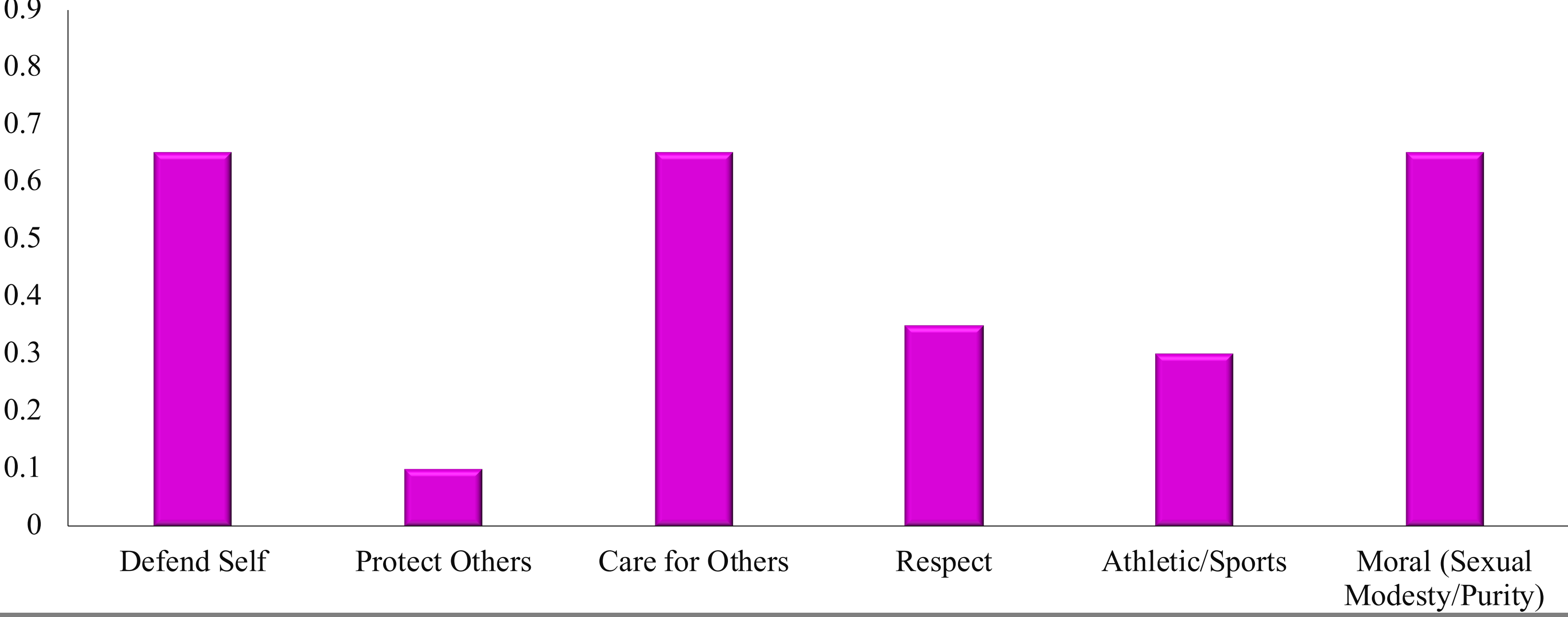


Table 2: *Expected Correlations between MHBS and Teaching Daughter(s)*



DISCUSSION

Overall, these studies will contribute to our understanding of how masculine honor beliefs relate to the types of life lessons individuals wish to pass on to the next generations. Thus far, our preliminary analyses reveal gender differences in what individuals wish to teach son(s) and daughter(s). However, subsequent analyses and data collection are needed to test for further differences and /or similarities between attitudes toward raising son(s) and daughter(s), gender differences/similarities about attitudes toward parental roles and expectations in socialization of children, and how masculine honor beliefs are related to these differences/similarities. Indeed, such a program of research would provide further insight into the transmission of masculine honor beliefs, and the extent to which children are likely to be socialized to be ass kickers and care takers.