

AMBIVALENT SEXISM AND ATTITUDES TOWARD WIFE ABUSE IN TURKEY AND BRAZIL

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Men and women in Turkey and Brazil completed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and measures of attitudes about wife abuse. In both nations hostile sexism (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS) positively correlated with attitudes that legitimize abuse. Regression analyses revealed that HS accounted for unique variance, but BS (once HS was controlled) was unrelated to wife abuse attitudes. These results: (a) add to the evidence for the cross-cultural validity of ambivalent sexism, (b) suggest that HS supports the justification of violence against wives, and (c) imply that the ostensible protectiveness of BS is contingent, failing to shield women from abuse if they are deemed to have challenged a husband's authority or violated conventional gender roles.

Men who hold favorable attitudes about the use of force and coercion in relationships are more likely to resort to their actual use (Malamuth, 1986). Given the disturbing prevalence of domestic abuse, it is important to understand the precursors of such attitudes, which include sexist beliefs about women. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1995) have suggested, however, that it is not sexism itself (traditional attitudes about women's rights and roles) that predicts domestic violence, but hostility toward women, which covaries with most measures of sexism. Recently, Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001) have developed a measure, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), which distinguishes between sexist beliefs that are subjectively positive versus negative toward women. Benevolent sexism (BS) is a subjectively affectionate and protective attitude that idealizes women in traditional roles, whereas hostile sexism (HS) expresses antagonism toward women who are perceived as violating traditional roles or challenging male dominance.

Although research relating HS and BS to attitudes about domestic violence is in its infancy, initial evidence with an

undergraduate sample in Turkey suggests that both HS and BS correlate with more favorable attitudes toward the use of physical force, though BS drops out as a predictor once HS is controlled (Sakallı, 2001). The relationship of HS to attitudes that legitimate wife abuse is unsurprising. In contrast, BS might be expected to exert a prophylactic effect because it promises male protectiveness and affection, especially toward women to whom men are romantically attached. This promise of protection, however, may ring hollow. In a large cross-cultural study involving 19 nations, Glick et al. (2000) found that HS and BS tend to be positively correlated, both (to a modest degree) at the individual level and (quite strongly) at the national level of analysis. Furthermore, across nations, both HS and BS scores are inversely related to gender equality. These findings suggest that HS and BS are complementary tools of control, with BS representing the "carrot" women are offered for complying to traditional roles and HS the "stick" that threatens women with punishment should they not defer to men.

More specifically, Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, and Zhu (1997) found that HS uniquely predicts negative attitudes toward women who fail to comply, whereas BS uniquely predicts positive attitudes toward women who conform to traditional roles. Wife abuse is typically legitimated by blaming the woman for provoking her husband through violations of gender norms (Haj-Yahia, 1998). If the protection and affection that BS promises to women is contingent on women's submissiveness to men and compliance with gender roles, BS may afford little or no protection to women deemed to have "provoked" a beating. In other words, the manner in which domestic

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abuse is justified may make the protectiveness of BS irrelevant.

The present study examines the relationship of HS and BS to attitudes about wife abuse in diverse samples from two nations, Turkey and Brazil, to examine whether the hostile component of sexism uniquely predicts attitudes that legitimate violence against women. Turkey and Brazil afford an interesting comparison. Both nations can be deemed “cultures of honor” (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996) in which a man’s ability to exert control over his wife is an important part of masculine identity. Both nations have had traditional cultural norms (now under legislative attack) that have (in the past) justified and excused physical abuse toward wives who are noncompliant with their husbands’ wishes (Rittersberger-Tılıç & Kalaycıoğlu, 2000; Saffiotti, 1994). Also, in prior cross-national comparisons of ambivalent sexism, Brazilian and Turkish samples had quite similar HS and BS scores, suggesting similar levels of sexist belief (Glick et al., 2000). Thus, there are many similarities between the two nations in terms of expectations concerning relationships between men and women, despite vast cultural differences between these countries (e.g., in religious practices).

The current research builds on recent work conducted in Turkey on ambivalent sexism and attitudes about domestic violence (Sakallı, 2001), but expands on this research by: (a) including community members (not just undergraduates) and (b) comparing results across two nations that differ on a number of cultural dimensions but are relatively similar in terms of the basic structure of gender relations. Our expectation was that the underlying similarities in the structure of gender relations would lead to similar results for the relationships of HS and BS to attitudes about the legitimacy of wife abuse in Turkey and Brazil.

METHOD

Participants

Turkish and Brazilian volunteers participated in a study of attitudes about marriage, completing a scale of attitudes about wife abuse and the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In both nations, roughly half of the participants were college students and half were from the wider community, although all participants were likely to be from middle or upper class backgrounds.

Turkish sample. All participants in this sample (421 women and 436 men) were from Ankara. The sample consisted of: (a) university students (189 women and 215 men; 95% of whom were not more than 25 years old) enrolled in lower-level psychology classes at Middle Eastern Technical University who filled out questionnaires in class and (b) members of the wider community (232 women and 221 men) recruited by student assistants

(e.g., acquaintances, neighbors). For the community members: ages ranged from 16 to 63 (with a median of 32); 34% had either a grade school or high school education and 66% were currently pursuing or had obtained a university or postgraduate degree. The vast majority (83%) of Turkish participants were Moslem (with almost all of the remainder claiming not to be religious).

Brazilian sample. All participants in this sample (212 women and 182 men) were from Rio de Janeiro. The sample consisted of: (a) full-time university students (105 women and 66 men; about 90% of whom were no more than 25 years old) who filled out questionnaires in undergraduate classes from a variety of areas (e.g., engineering, medicine, communications) and (b) community members (107 women and 116 men) who filled out questionnaires in university night classes (typically nontraditional age students who hold full-time jobs) or parents, relatives, and friends who had been recruited by students in an undergraduate social psychology class. For the community members: ages ranged from 19 to 58 (with a median of 29); 7% had completed high school, 69% had at least partially completed a university degree, and 24% had completed a university degree. Although participants were not asked to indicate religion, the vast majority were likely to consider themselves to be Catholic (the state-supported religion of Brazil).

Overall, the Brazilian sample was less variable in educational achievement than the Turkish sample—of the community portion of the sample, only 7% of the Brazilians had not completed or partially completed college as compared to 34% of the Turkish community members. Also, although the overall age range of the community portion of the Brazilian sample was similar to that of the Turkish sample, there was less variance in age in Brazil ($SD = 7.55$) as compared to Turkey ($SD = 9.89$), reflecting a younger community sample in Brazil (fewer than 10% were over 40 years of age) as compared to Turkey (where over 30% were 40 or older). In short, the community portion of the Brazilian (as compared to the Turkish) sample varied less in both age and education.

Procedure

Participants were either asked to fill out questionnaires in class or provided with questionnaires by student volunteers and asked to complete the surveys on their own. All scales used a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) response format. Because the studies were originally conducted independently, the wife abuse attitude measures were not identical. Nevertheless, the measures are conceptually similar, sharing major themes (tolerance for wife abuse, blaming women’s disobedience for eliciting abuse). The Brazilian measure (31 items) was adapted from the Inventory of Beliefs about Wife Beating (Saunders, Lynch, Grayson, & Linz, 1987) and the Blaming the Wife for Violence Against Her scale (Haj-Yahia, 1998), translated

(and back-translated) into Portuguese. The Turkish measure (12 items) was adapted from the Attitudes Toward Wife Abuse scale (Briere, 1987), translated (and back-translated) into Turkish.

The similarities in the attitudes toward wife abuse scales used in the two nations is evident in the overlap between a number of items, such as: “Some women seem to ask for beatings from their husbands” (Turkey) and “Many wives intentionally provoke their husbands to make them beat them” (Brazil); “A wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her” (Turkey) and “When a woman is beaten by her husband, she should abandon him” (Brazil); “A man should be arrested if he hits his wife” (Turkey) and “Women should be protected by public authorities if their husbands beat them” (Brazil); “A man is never justified in beating his wife” (Turkey) and “A husband has no right to beat his wife, even if she breaks agreements she has made with him” (Brazil). Items were scored so that higher scores indicated greater tolerance for or justification of wife abuse.

In both nations translations of the ASI scales (into Turkish and Portuguese) that had previously been validated in a large cross-cultural study of ambivalent sexism (Glick et al., 2000) were used.

RESULTS

Reliability and Means

Ambivalent sexism scales. The HS ($\alpha = .88$ and $.86$) and BS scales ($\alpha = .79$ and $.77$) were reliable in both Brazil and Turkey, respectively (and have previously been validated in both countries, Glick et al., 2000). As in prior research the HS and BS scales correlated positively among participants in both Turkey, $r = .38$ (women) and $.14$ (men), and Brazil, $r = .48$ (women) and $.34$ (men), $p < .01$ for all. As in past research (Glick et al., 2000), mean HS and BS scores (see Table 1) were very similar when comparing across Turkish and Brazilian samples and sex differences on HS, but not on BS, were evident within each country. A 2 (Sex of Participant) \times 2 (ASI scale: HS, BS) analysis of variance in which ASI scale was treated as a repeated measures factor (i.e., HS and BS scale scores were the dependent variables) was computed within each sample. In both cases, there was a significant Sex of Participant \times ASI scale interaction: $F(1, 392) = 87.31, p < .001$ for Brazil; $F(1, 798) = 179.83, p < .001$ for Turkey. In each case, men scored significantly higher than women on HS: $t(392) = 9.69, p < .001$ for Brazil; $t(798) = 14.39, p < .001$ for Turkey. In contrast, there was no sex difference for BS in Brazil, $t(392) = -.01, ns$, and women scored slightly (but significantly) higher in BS than men in Turkey, $t(798) = 2.25, p < .05$. Although women, compared to men, generally rejected HS, they accepted BS as much or more than men (a finding that has been replicated in many nations, see Glick et al., 2000, Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Table 1

Means for Ambivalent Sexism and Attitudes Toward Wife Abuse Scales

<i>Nation</i>	<i>HS</i>	<i>BS</i>	<i>Attitudes Toward Wife Abuse</i>
			Men
Brazil			
<i>M</i>	4.10	3.94	2.22
<i>SD</i>	1.14	.97	.84
Turkey			
<i>M</i>	4.13	3.66	2.98
<i>SD</i>	.90	.85	.77
			Women
Brazil			
<i>M</i>	3.02	3.94	1.65
<i>SD</i>	1.08	1.05	.43
Turkey			
<i>M</i>	3.25	3.80	2.13
<i>SD</i>	.96	.85	.69

Note: Possible range for each scale is 1 to 6.

Attitudes toward wife abuse scales. Both the Brazilian scale ($\alpha = .90$) and the Turkish scale ($\alpha = .83$) of attitudes toward wife abuse were highly reliable. Means for these scales are presented in Table 1. Men scored significantly higher than women (indicating greater endorsement of attitudes that legitimize wife abuse) on the attitudes toward wife abuse measures in both Turkey, $t(850) = 16.63, p < .001$, and in Brazil, $t(392) = 8.53, p < .001$.

Ambivalent Sexism and Attitudes That Legitimize Wife Abuse

Our main hypotheses concern the relationship of HS and BS to attitudes about wife abuse. To examine these relationships, we computed separate setwise hierarchical regressions for female and male respondents in Turkey and in Brazil. Although the samples from each nation were similar in many ways—consisting in roughly equal measure of students and members of the wider community—the community members in Brazil were generally younger and more highly educated than their counterparts in Turkey. To compensate for the possible confounding effects of age and education across the two samples, these variables were covaried out by being entered in block 1. Scores on HS and BS were entered in block 2 (i.e., only after the effects of age and education had been controlled). Initial analyses in which the HS \times BS interaction was entered in block 3 revealed no significant effects for the HS-BS interaction term (for either women or men in both nations). Therefore, we report the simpler analyses that examine only the main effects of HS and BS. Also, separate analyses of the student and community portions of the samples in each of the nations yielded

Table 2
Men's HS and BS Scores as Predictors of Attitudes that Legitimate Wife Abuse

Block: Predictors Zero-order	<i>r</i>		<i>Beta</i>		<i>t</i>	
	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey
Block 1						
Age	-.14	.18**	-.14	.21	1.76	4.46**
Education	-.04	-.22**	.02	-.25	.21	-5.18**
Block 2						
Age	-.14	.18**	.02	.21	.24	4.73**
Education	-.04	-.22**	-.02	-.25	-.23	-5.69**
HS	.56**	.38**	.55	.38	7.94**	8.71**
BS	.23**	.14**	.04	.04	.64	.80
Block: Variables	<i>R</i>		<i>R² change</i>		<i>F</i>	
	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey
1: Age, Education	.14	.31	.02	.09	1.71	20.96**
2: HS, BS	.56	.50	.30	.15	38.60**	40.05**

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

Note: All beta weights are for block 2 of the setwise hierarchical regression; statistically significant beta weights are highlighted in bold type.

similar results with respect to the relationships of HS and BS to attitudes toward wife abuse. Thus, the main analyses presented here include students and community members together. Regression results for men and for women are reported in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

The relationship between the ambivalent sexism scales and attitudes that legitimize wife abuse were highly consistent across the Brazilian and Turkish samples. In both nations (and for both men and women), the addition of HS and BS in block 2 of the regression equations significantly increased *R*². More specifically, HS predicted more tolerance for wife abuse among both men and women. Fur-

thermore, the standardized regression weights for HS were about as strong as its zero-order correlations with wife abuse attitudes (i.e., the relationship between HS and wife abuse attitudes was not diminished by controlling for age, education, or BS). In both countries, the trend was for a stronger correlation between HS and wife abuse attitudes for men than for women. Results were also consistent for the relationship of BS to wife abuse attitudes. Although zero-order correlations were statistically significant, BS failed to predict wife abuse attitudes for men or for women across both samples once its positive correlation to HS was accounted for in the regression equations.

Table 3
Women's HS and BS Scores as Predictors of Attitudes that Legitimate Wife Abuse

Block: Predictors Zero-order	<i>r</i>		<i>Beta</i>		<i>t</i>	
	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey
Block 1						
Age	.06	.11*	.09	.09	1.30	1.82
Education	-.08	-.18**	-.11	-.17	-1.48	-3.40**
Block 2						
Age	.06	.11*	.08	.08	1.18	1.55
Education	-.08	-.18**	-.05	-.16	-.67	-3.37**
HS	.39**	.24**	.36	.22	5.01**	4.21**
BS	.22**	.15**	.04	.04	.53	.83
Block: Variables	<i>R</i>		<i>R² change</i>		<i>F</i>	
	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey	Brazil	Turkey
1: Age, Education	.12	.20	.01	.04	1.46	8.24**
2: HS, BS	.40	.31	.14	.06	17.85**	12.33**

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

Note: All beta weights are for block 2 of the setwise hierarchical regression; statistically significant beta weights are highlighted in bold type.

For the Turkish sample only, age (for men) remained positively associated and education level (for both sexes) remained negatively associated with attitudes toward wife abuse once HS and BS scores were added to the regression equation. In contrast, both the zero-order correlations of age and education to attitudes about wife abuse and the betas for these predictors were nonsignificant for the Brazilian sample. Although it is possible that the differences between the two nations with respect to age and education as predictors are due to culture, a more parsimonious statistical explanation seems likely. Recall that there was less variability in age and education within the Brazilian sample (even among community members) than in the Turkish sample, making it less likely that age and education would correlate with other variables.

DISCUSSION

The present study demonstrated consistent relationships of both HS and BS to attitudes that justify wife abuse in samples from two countries with divergent cultures that, nevertheless, are similar in many ways in terms of gender-related attitudes. For men and women in Turkey and in Brazil, HS was the strongest predictor of attitudes toward wife abuse and made a unique contribution that was not diminished when controlling for BS, age, or education level. These results suggest that HS acts to legitimate wife abuse, presumably making abusive behavior more likely for men, and toleration of such behavior more likely for women, who endorse it. Similarly, for men and women in Turkey and in Brazil, higher scores on BS also correlated with attitudes that legitimate abuse; however, BS did not uniquely predict attitudes about the legitimacy of wife abuse once its relationship with HS was controlled (a finding that was consistent for both men and women in each of the nations studied).

Ambivalent sexism theory stresses how basic similarities between cultures—the degree of male structural control (patriarchy) and interdependence between the sexes (due to sexual reproduction and a gendered division of labor)—generate common consequences (HS and BS) for attitudes toward women. Despite dissimilarities in language, religion, and a variety of other cultural practices, Turkey and Brazil are relatively similar to each other on these basic, underlying variables, such as the degree of male structural dominance (e.g., as assessed by the United Nations gender development index; United Nations Development Programme, 1998). The similarity of the current findings across two divergent cultures adds to the cross-cultural support for the generality of the ambivalent sexism construct and the ASI scales (see Glick et al., 2000).

One caution in interpreting the results is that the attitude toward wife abuse scales that were administered in Turkey and Brazil were not identical. Therefore, direct comparisons of mean scores in the two countries are not appropriate. Nevertheless, the attitudes toward abuse scales are

conceptually and thematically similar. Furthermore, that HS and BS were related to the attitude toward wife abuse scales in a highly consistent fashion across the two nations supports the idea that the different attitudes toward wife abuse scales tapped similar constructs.

Another limitation is that the results are correlational and so must be interpreted with appropriate caution. The causal relationship (if any) between ambivalent sexism and attitudes toward wife abuse cannot be disentangled by these data. At the very least, however, the current findings suggest that although ambivalently sexist men (those who endorse both HS and BS) may express a willingness to rescue “damsels in distress,” they simultaneously view abuse as a legitimate reaction to wives who fail to conform to a submissive role. That the positive correlation between BS and attitudes that legitimate abuse dropped to nonsignificance once HS was controlled suggests that BS itself may not be the driving force behind attitudes that legitimate abuse. At best, however, BS does not seem to deliver on its overt promise of protection to women since it fails to temper abusive attitudes toward “disobedient” women (those who are viewed as challenging a husband’s authority or violating gender prescriptions).

Despite the failure of BS to deliver on what it promises, women may be drawn to BS in the face of men’s sexist hostility. Glick et al. (2000) found that nations in which men score highest on HS are those in which women most strongly embrace BS, presumably for the protection it claims to offer. In the current studies, women similarly showed a tendency, in comparison to men, to reject HS, but to accept BS as much as or more than men. It seems that sexism creates a vicious cycle in which the more hostility women face from men, the more motivated they are to accept BS, relying on members of the dominant group (men) to protect them. Unfortunately, women’s endorsement of BS only serves to reinforce gender inequality (Glick et al., 2000) while offering a highly contingent (and ultimately hollow) promise of protection that is enacted only when women behave in line with sexist expectations and prescriptions.

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