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In the eyes of others : the role of honor concerns in explaining and preventing insult-elicited aggression

Shafa, S.

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Author: Shafa, Saïd
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Chapter 4

Regulating honor in the face of insults

"*Honor is like an island, rugged and without a beach;*
once we have left it, we can never return"
Nicholas Boileau

This chapter is based on: Shafa, S., Harinck, F., Ellemers, N., & Beersma, B. (*under review*). Regulating honor in the face of insults.

Abstract

Previous research has examined honor-related responses prior to and after an insult but little is known about what underlying mechanisms explain this behavior. We connect honor concerns to Self-Regulation Theory and we argue that honor is associated with prevention focus in an escalatory setting. In three studies, we investigated the role of prevention focus as a motivator of obliging behavior prior to and aggressive behavior after conflict escalation among those high in honor. In Study 4.1 we found higher levels of prevention focus among high-honor participants, compared to low-honor participants, in a community sample. In two following studies we experimentally activated honor concerns and demonstrated that indeed, those high in honor were more accommodating in their initial approach to a conflict (Study 4.2), but showed more aggression once they engaged in an actual insulting interaction (Study 4.3). Additionally, both types of responses proved to be (at least partially) driven by higher levels of prevention focus. Our findings provide initial empirical support for the idea that when honor is at stake, prevention concerns relate to obliging responses before as well as aggressive responses after conflict escalation following insults.

In Western culture, honor is considered a somewhat archaic concept, mostly applicable to very specific groups or organizations such as the military. However, in many cultures, honor is a very important societal concept, prescribing normative behavior and guiding social conduct in all levels of society (Peristiany, 1965). In these so-called honor cultures, grave importance is attached to social image and reputation of the individual as well as the family (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2000, 2002a).

Previous research has focused on the influence of honor-culture endorsement and the way people respond to insults. After being insulted, members of honor cultures tend to become angrier and show more aggression than members of non-honor cultures (Cohen & Nisbett, 1997; Cohen, et al., 1996; Van Osch, et al., 2013). This response is not limited to cultural differences. Even within the same cultural context, people who are more concerned with honor tend to respond more vigorously and competitively to insults (Beersma, et al., 2003; IJzerman, et al., 2007). Most studies report that those who adhere strongly to honor are not only more antagonistic after an insult, but also more friendly or cooperative when there is no insult (see also Harinck, et al., 2013); however, this latter observation has attracted less attention. Moreover, the effect of insults on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses has been documented extensively, yet it is still unknown which underlying psychological mechanisms might explain these effects.

The goal of the current research is to provide a new perspective on honor-related conflict escalation after an insult by connecting it to Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997). In this paper we present both correlational and experimental research to assess this mechanism. Moreover, by experimentally inducing salience of honor concerns in participants with a similar cultural background, we isolate the effect of honor from other cultural differences. This allows us to examine the processes of maintaining and protecting honor in the

face of insults and specify the role of the underlying psychological mechanisms involved.

Honor

Traditionally, cultural psychologists differentiate between cultures on the basis of seminal international value research by Hofstede and colleagues (Hofstede, 1980; Kitayama & Cohen, 2007a; Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). This line of work examines differences in cultural values such as individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance. More recently, there is more focus on an alternative approach that emphasizes cultural *logics* rather than values. These logics may be particularly informative because they weave together a "constellation of shared beliefs, values, behaviors, practices, and so on that are organized around a central theme" (Leung & Cohen, 2011, p. 508).

One such theme is the logic of honor. Based on anthropological research, honor has been defined as 'the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society' (Pitt-Rivers, 1965, p. 21). In honor cultures, a person's *worth* is defined in terms of his claim to honor but also the extent to which he is considered honorable by his society (Gilmore, 1987; Peristiany, 1965). This means that honor has both an internal and an external component. Honor cannot be claimed unless it is acknowledged by others – likewise it can be taken away if it is challenged by others (Miller, 1993). Therefore, members of honor cultures particularly strive for positive social evaluations and a good reputation, because positive social evaluations are an important source of their sense of worthiness.

Research has also shown that honor can refer to different personal and relational domains, such as personal integrity, masculine, and feminine honor (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002a, 2002b). Nevertheless, the domain that is especially relevant to people's worth in honor cultures is family honor

(Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2000, 2002b). In the current research, we focus on this domain, because previous research has demonstrated that this domain is culturally the most central part of honor (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2012; Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002b). Additionally, recent research has demonstrated that it is not masculine honor but family honor that predicts aggressive responses towards insults in Mediterranean cultures (Van Osch, et al., 2013).

Honor and insults

Previous research has examined honor-related responses to insults. This work demonstrated that high-honor participants become more upset, are physiologically more primed for aggression, and respond more vigorously and more competitively after being insulted compared to low-honor participants (Beersma, et al., 2003; Cohen, et al., 1996; IJzerman, et al., 2007; Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2008). These results clearly illustrate that people who endorse honor are more inclined to react strongly to insults. Nevertheless, there is also evidence that prior to or in the absence of an insult the pattern is reversed. For example, in their study Cohen and colleagues observed that, prior to being insulted, honor culture members were more polite and friendly than non-honor culture members (Cohen, et al., 1996). Whereas this line of research has traditionally focused on the finding that honor culture participants respond more aggressively after being insulted, the differences obtained can also be explained by the obliging behavior of the honor culture participants who were not insulted. Moreover, Beersma and colleagues (2003) also highlight that relative cooperativeness is observed among those high in honor. In their study, honor concerns were negatively correlated with competitive conflict intentions. Additionally, recent research by Harinck and colleagues corroborates that in the absence of an insult, honor-culture members handle a conflict situation more constructively than non-honor culture members (Harinck, et al., 2013).

Thus, although most researchers have emphasized that honor endorsement can elicit aggression-related outcomes, we also focus on the other side of the same coin, by examining whether the absence of insults is associated with more obliging and constructive behavior among honor culture members (Harinck, et al., 2013). We also argue that these seemingly incompatible responses actually result from the same underlying psychological mechanism, relating to the way in which people strive to achieve or maintain their honor-related goals. Thus, our aim is to identify the motivational inclinations that drive obliging as well as aggressive behavior and why those concerned with honor respond so differently prior to and after an insult.

Preventing loss of honor

We propose that when honor is salient, preventing loss of honor is the reason why people respond more obligingly prior to an insult, while this also explains why they respond more vigorously after an insult. This notion can help reconcile seemingly inconsistent results to date. As stated before, preventing loss of honor is an important concern among those who endorse honor values. Because honor is transient and relies on social affirmation, people concerned with their honor and reputation may experience that they have more to lose than people who are less concerned with their honor. In fact, Leung and Cohen (2011) argued that in honor cultures, those who are not concerned with opinions of others are considered unworthy of honor. Operating obligingly and cautiously in interactions can help to remain in other people's grace as a way to ensure a positive evaluation. Accordingly, it has been suggested that norms of friendliness in honor cultures effectively prevent unintended threat to other people's esteem resulting in spirals of aggressive responses (Cohen & Vandello, 2004; Cohen, et al., 1999).

Conversely, impugning someone's honor is a sure way to escalate a tense situation. Doing so always involves the risk of retaliatory action, as a threat to

honor requires restoration, even if this is by means of violence (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Indeed, it has been demonstrated that high-honor participants tend to react vigorously to insults as a mean to restore their threatened social image after an insult (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2008). These findings thus seem to suggest that honor-related aggression can be used as a self-defensive strategy, mainly driven by the motivation to prevent an undesired outcome: the loss of honor (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Hayes & Lee, 2005).

If honor indeed activates concerns for the maintenance and protection of reputation, this should be apparent in the motivational inclinations that drive people's behavior, especially in a potentially escalatory situation. However, to our knowledge most of the prior research has examined outcome *behavior following* an insult. Therefore, little is known about the distinct motives of high-honor vs. low-honor people in such situations. To shed further light on these issues, we build on insights from Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997) to inform us on why and how people pursue honor-related goals in the face of insults. The novelty of this approach is that it explicates the *process* of maintaining honor in different phases of a possibly insulting situation.

Regulatory Focus Theory

According to Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997), people are motivated to make their current state match a desired end state. However, the strategies that people employ to reach desired goal strongly depend on the specific characteristics of their goal. Higgins (1997) distinguishes between end states that can be characterized as ideal goals (goals associated with nurturance, growth and gains) and ought goals (goals associated with safety, responsibility and losses). Each type of goal elicits a different focus, which is characterized by different strategies, resulting in different emotions when the desired end state is or is not achieved. People who strive for ideal goals adopt a *promotion focus*. They eagerly pursue gains and avoid non-gains, are willing to take risks to

achieve their desired outcome and they experience elation when they reach their goal and dejection when they do not. In contrast, people striving for ought goals adopt a *prevention focus* as they pursue non-losses and avoid losses, and are cautious and vigilant to prevent the undesired outcome. They experience quiescence when they reach their desired end state and agitation when they do not. Thus, Regulatory Focus Theory informs us on the motivational inclinations that people employ to pursue specific end states that are construed as ideal vs. ought goals (Higgins, 1996, 1997). It also specifies between cognitive as well as emotional indicators of both foci.

In the context of the present research, goal achievement through prevention focus is particularly relevant. Activation of prevention focus strongly motivates people to prevent negative outcomes. They are prepared to go to great lengths to achieve such goals, because prevention goals are more likely to be considered a necessity (Zaal, Laar, Ståhl, Ellemers, & Derks, 2011). Thus, this focus elicits strong negative feelings when prevention goals are thwarted, and can even result in risky or destructive behavior (Sassenberg & Hansen, 2007; Scholer, Zou, Fujita, Stroessner, & Higgins, 2010). We argue that in the context of a conflict, a prevention focus should elicit behavior aiming to prevent conflict escalation. Demonstrating obliging or cooperative behavior is a safe way to avoid an overt confrontation, because it shows good will and is more likely to be reciprocated with cooperation compared to competitive or dominating behavior. However, once the tension reaches a point where threat becomes imminent, people with strong prevention focus would be inclined to do whatever it takes to limit the negative consequences, even by lashing out (see also Keller, Hurst, & Uskul, 2008; Sassenberg & Hansen, 2007; Zaal, et al., 2011).

Only a few scholars to date have addressed the link between regulatory focus theory and cultural values, so that empirical evidence supporting our reasoning is scarce (see also Hamamura, Meijer, Heine, Kamaya, & Hori, 2009;

Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000). Nevertheless, considering the particular concerns associated with the maintenance and protection of honor, our central hypothesis is that those who endorse honor to a greater extent will also be more prevention focused, especially in situation where honor is under threat, such as during an emerging conflict. That is, as honor seems a necessary commodity that is hard to gain but easy to lose, we expect that concerns for honor will prompt a prevention focus (the primary goal being maintaining honor and avoiding the loss of honor) during conflicts. In the present research, we investigate how honor relates to regulatory focus, emotions, and behaviors in different types of escalatory situations. By doing so, we hope to clarify why people who are concerned with honor react so differently in non-offensive and offensive situations.

We emphasize that our reasoning applies to possibly offensive situations in particular. Indeed we do not wish to suggest that honor always instigates prevention focus. While honor concerns can certainly raise promotion goals, we argue that the salience of honor is relatively likely to raise a preoccupation with prevention of loss of honor especially in potentially offensive social interactions.

Present research

In three studies, we examined the predicted link between honor concerns and prevention focus, and how this impacts on emotions and behavior in different stages of conflict escalation. In a first exploratory study, we compared individuals from an honor-culture to individuals from a non-honor culture to relate cultural differences in honor endorsement to regulatory focus preferences. In the second study, we examined how honor affects initial approaches to possibly escalatory situations. We connected the salience of honor to emotions and conflict intentions to examine responses in a setting that had the potential to escalate but had not escalated yet. In the third study, we immersed participants in an escalatory situation to assess resulting emotions and behavioral indicators

of aggression (administration of white noise). By separating responses to pre-offensive situations from those to explicitly offensive interactions, we aim to shed light on the process of conflict development and reveal whether the same underlying mechanisms could account for different responses in each phase.

Study 4.1

In the first study we assessed honor-related differences in regulatory focus among a community sample of honor culture and non-honor culture members. We hypothesized that participants from an honor culture should endorse honor concerns to a greater extent than non-honor culture participants. We also expected honor-culture members to subscribe to prevention focus goals more than non-honor culture members and that honor concerns would relate to prevention focus, but we did not expect any differences on promotion focus.

Participants and Design

Participants were recruited in public spaces around Leiden Central Station in The Netherlands to take part in a larger general web survey on cultural differences in conflict behavior. In order to do so, they wrote down their email address and the link to the online survey website was emailed to them. A total of 186 participants took part in the survey, but only 128 participants fully completed the survey (68.8%). For the purpose of the current study we only analyzed the responses of participants that could clearly be classified as representatives of a low-honor or high-honor culture group. Participants from Middle Eastern (e.g., Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran; n = 8; 8 %) or Mediterranean (e.g., Turkey and Morocco; n = 34; 34,4 %) origin were classified as high-honor. Dutch participants (n = 57; 57.6 %) constituted the low-honor group. It is common practice to use this group as a control sample when examining honor concerns (IJzerman & Cohen, 2011; Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2008; Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002a, 2002b). This procedure resulted in ninety-nine participants whose further response could be

related to honor concerns. Honor vs. non-honor participants did not differ in terms of age (*M* = 24.18, *SD* = 7.62) and gender (Female N = 64; 64,6 %). We employed a between-participants design, comparing high-honor culture participants to low-honor culture participants.

Procedure

Participants were briefed about the goal of the survey and consented to voluntary participation. They were also informed that those who completed the full survey, could contend in a lottery to obtain one of five gift certificates worth €50, -. Winners were contacted via email and the gift certificates were mailed to them. The measures of interest for this study (except for demographics) were gathered at the beginning and thus they were not influenced by the content of the survey. All items were measured using seven point scales (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Measures

Honor concerns. Honor concerns were measured by a truncated version of the family honor concerns scale (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002b). This scale consisted of three items (α = .76) and measured concerns for the central domain of family honor. For example, an item in this honor domain was: *To what extent would it harm your self-worth if you were known as someone who is not able to protect your family's reputation*[9].

[9] In all three studies, we also included three other honor domains (social integrity, masculine honor, and feminine honor). In general, the effects for these domains were not as strong and as consistent as those on the family honor domain. This in line with previous research on honor concerns indicating that particularly the concern for family honor distinguishes non-honor cultures such as the Netherlands from honor cultures in Middle-Eastern and Mediterranean countries (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2012; Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002a, 2002b). Additional results concerning other honor domains are available upon request.

Regulatory focus. Prevention focus (*I do not take risks often, security is a core criterion I care for* and *I always follow rules and regulations,* $\alpha = .57$) and promotion focus (e.g., *For me the big picture is more important than the details, If I really want to achieve a goal, I'll find a way* and *I like trying out new things,* ($\alpha = .24$) were assessed with three items derived from a recent measure developed by Sassenberg and colleagues (Sassenberg, Ellemers, & Scheepers, 2012).

Results

Honor concerns. Analysis of variance of the honor concerns scale yielded a significant culture effect, $F(1, 97) = 15.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Participants in the high-honor cultural group indeed reported being more concerned about their honor ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 1.10$) than participants in the low-honor cultural group ($M = 4.84$, $SD = .75$).

Regulatory focus. Results of an ANOVA revealed that there was a significant difference in the amount of prevention focus reported, $F(1, 97) = 4.70$, $p = .033$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. These results indicate that as expected, high-honor culture participants ($M = 5.23$, $SD = .88$) were more prevention-focused than low-honor culture members ($M = 4.79$, $SD = 1.05$). There was no difference between the two groups on the promotion focus measure (high honor $M = 4.90$, $SD = .89$; low honor $M = 4.90$, $SD = .93$; $F < 1$).

Honor and regulatory focus. We assessed the direct relationship between honor concerns and regulatory focus. For that purpose we calculated the correlations between honor concerns and the two regulatory foci separately. Results indicated that honor concerns were positively correlated with prevention focus ($r = .27$, $p = .007$), while the correlation between honor concerns and promotion focus was not significant ($r = .14$, *n.s.*). As predicted, these results indicate that higher levels of honor concerns are associated with higher levels of prevention focus, but not necessarily different levels of promotion focus.

Discussion

Results of this first study offer preliminary evidence in line with our reasoning. Participants from an honor culture reported more prevention focus, confirming our hypothesis that honor is associated with prevention focus. Interestingly, honor concerns correlated with prevention focus but not with promotion focus, but this might also be due to the fact that the honor concern items were formulated in terms of undesirable outcomes. In general, the outcomes are in line with the idea that, on a cultural level, honor concerns are associated with a heightened prevention focus.

One limitation of this study however, was the low internal consistency of the regulatory focus measures, particularly for promotion focus. This measure has been validated in previous research (Sassenberg, et al., 2012). However, our decision to use a truncated form to keep the length of the survey to an acceptable level for a community sample, might have diminished the scale's internal consistency. Therefore, we used alternative scales to measure regulatory focus in Study 4.2.

Furthermore, although comparing cultural groups in a community sample allows for a comparison with high ‘face validity’, it is difficult to rule out the contribution of other possible factors (e.g., language deficiency or societal status of minority groups). Therefore, in studies 2 and 3 we used an experimental manipulation to make honor concerns more salient within participants from a similar cultural background in order to exclude other cultural differences as possible explanatory factors and to validate our causal predictions. To our knowledge, this is a new method in honor research which allows us to eliminate confounding aspects of cultural differences that are not honor related (see also IJzerman & Cohen, 2011; Leung & Cohen, 2011).

Study 4.2

In Study 4.2, we set out to investigate the connection between honor concerns, emotional responses, and behavioral inclinations in a situation which has the potential to escalate but has not escalated yet. In this study, we only selected non-honor culture members of Dutch origin. Because the Netherlands is known as a prototypically Western and individualistic culture the Dutch seem to embrace the ideal of *dignity* rather than honor (IJzerman & Cohen, 2011). Dignity pertains to someone's internally defined worth, something that cannot be taken away by others (IJzerman & Cohen, 2011; Leung & Cohen, 2011). Within dignity cultures, honor concerns are generally less salient. Nevertheless, research has shown that the notion of honor does exist in such cultures and may be activated under certain circumstances (Beersma, et al., 2003; IJzerman, et al., 2007; Shafa, Harinck, Ellemers, & Beersma, 2014). We take advantage of this possibility by making honor concerns more salient using an experimental manipulation, to pinpoint the psychological implications of honor concerns while ruling out other cultural artifacts.

We assessed how participants with experimentally induced honor concerns would approach a possibly escalatory situation and we considered the role of prevention focus in this process. We expected that high-honor participants would adopt a more de-escalatory approach to a possibly escalatory situation, particularly if the possibility of escalation is implicit rather than explicit. We also expected prevention focus to mediate this effect.

Participants

Ninety students of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Leiden University participated in this study. After first inspection of the data, 11 participants were identified as having an ethnic background associated with an honor culture. To maintain the cultural homogeneity of our sample and prevent confounding effects of different cultural backgrounds on the honor manipulation, they were

excluded from analysis. Additionally, five participants were excluded from analysis because they did not comply with the instructions of the experimental manipulation. The final dataset consisted of seventy-four non-honor culture participants (56 female, 75.7 %, M_{age} = 20.85, SD_{age} = 3.37). Gender and age were equally distributed among conditions.

Design

The study had a 2 (honor condition: low honor vs. high honor) by 2 (response condition: explicit escalation vs. implicit escalation) factorial design and was conducted using a paper and pencil survey and conflict scenarios.

Materials and Procedure

This study was part of a series of unrelated lab experiments. After consenting, participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions and received a booklet containing the questionnaire. All measures were assessed using seven point scales, unless stated otherwise.

Honor manipulation. The first part of the survey consisted of a manipulation to activate low honor vs. high honor in participants (see Appendix 4.1). According to theory, the value of people in an honor culture is 1) based on the personal adherence to the honor code and 2) depends on their social value in the eyes of others (Beersma, et al., 2003; Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002b). The manipulation was developed to capture both these aspects of honor concerns. To this effect, we first asked participants to indicate their agreement with a series of honor code related statements. To make honor more or less salient, the items were identical in content across the conditions, but phrased in such a way that participants would be inclined to indicate agreement (high-honor) or disagreement (low-honor) depending on the experimental condition ('leading questionnaire', see also Libby & Eibach, 2002). For example, in the high-honor condition, statements were formulated moderately, such as *Values such as honor and respect are important*. This statement should elicit some

agreement even among non-honor culture participants. Conversely, the same statement was formulated very extremely in the low-honor condition as *Values such as honor and respect are more important than the law*, which should elicit general disagreement among non-honor culture participants. Thus, by phrasing honor statements such that participants would be inclined to endorse or reject them, we intended to activate or deactivate their endorsement of the honor code.

The second step of the manipulation aimed to activate or deactivate socially conferred worth in participants (Lee, et al., 2000). Participants in the high-honor condition were asked to think about a situation in which their primary concern was to maintain a positive social image. Participants in the low-honor condition were asked to recollect a personal situation in which it was very important to them to maintain a positive self-image. Participants were instructed to describe the situation and explain why it was important for them to maintain their reputation or self-image. In summary, 1) elicited ag*reement with honor statements* and 2) a focus on *reputation* were used to *activate honor concerns*. On the other hand 1) elicited *disagreement with honor statements* and 2) a focus on *self-image* were used to suppress *honor concerns* .[10]

We note that both elements are part of this manipulation to reflect the consequence of honor concerns in full. Thus, we did not aim to establish their

[10] In both Study 4.2 and 4.3, participants in the high-honor condition indeed tended to agree with the moderate honor statements (means between 5 and 6), while participants in the low-honor condition mostly disagreed with the extreme honor-statements (means between 2 and 3; *p*s < .001). The reported situations in response to the open manipulation questions in both studies concerned mostly academic performance or relational struggles. However, as instructed, in the high-honor condition, people reported concerns in terms of social pressure (appearing competent, impressing colleagues or parents, maintain 'playboy' reputation); while in the low honor-condition, concerns were related to maintaining a positive self-image (maintaining confident, being perseverant, not becoming insecure)

separate effects in this study. Additionally, there is little construct validity in separating the two steps. Emphasizing socially conferred worth without the honor statements may also activate 'face' ideals (Leung & Cohen, 2011), while only eliciting agreement with honor statements would not activate honor as effectively if socially conferred worth was not made salient.

Vignettes and response manipulation. In the next part of the survey, participants read a description of an argument. We randomly assigned all participants to one of two different versions to make sure our findings were not restricted to one particular conflict situation. Half of the participants were asked to imagine getting into an argument with a neighbor, who made noise playing a musical instrument while they were studying. The other half of the participants were invited to imagine getting into an argument with a fellow student who had not completed his/her part of an assignment while the deadline was approaching. After reading the scenario, we measured participants' regulatory strategy to deal with the situation (Sassenberg, Jonas, Shah, & Brazy, 2007).

We then introduced the response manipulation. In the scenario involving the noisy neighbor, the neighbor's alleged response was: "*Why don't you go study in the library?"* in the implicit escalation condition. In the explicit escalation condition the same response was presented, followed by the insult "*sourpuss"* ("*zeurpiet*" in Dutch). In the student scenario, the student allegedly responded: "*I thought we were supposed do this together."* in the implicit escalation condition. In the explicit escalation condition, the same response was presented, followed by the insult *"backstabber"* ("*matennaaier*" in Dutch).

Directly after reading this response we assessed management intentions and the perceived offensiveness of the response. Next, we assessed participants' regulatory focus after the opponent's response by asking them to indicate to what extent they experienced emotions associated with prevention and promotion focus (Higgins, 1997; Shah & Higgins, 2001). Finally, we assessed

the effectiveness of the honor manipulation with the honor concerns scale and collected demographics (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002b). Participants were then debriefed, thanked, and rewarded course credit for their cooperation.

Measures

Honor manipulation check. For reasons discussed in Study 4.1 and in order to be consistent over the three studies, we focused on the same three-item scale as in Study 4.1 (α = .79), to assess the effectiveness of the honor manipulation (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002b).

Regulatory strategy. We asked participants which strategy they were likely to adopt in such a situation, using the Regulatory Strategy scale (Sassenberg, et al., 2007) with five bipolar items measured on nine-point scales (α = .68). Each item was represented by a promotion focus strategy at one end and a prevention focus strategy at the other end (e.g., 1 = *take risks,* 9 = *be cautious* or *1 = go for security, 9 = go for success* (r)). The closer a participant's score to the promotion end of the scale, the higher their reported inclination towards promotion strategy and vice versa. The midpoint of the scale indicated that participants did not prefer one type of regulatory strategy over the other. Items were recoded so that higher scores always indicated a stronger preference for prevention strategies.

Response manipulation check. Three items were used to test the effectiveness of the response manipulation (α = .68). These items measured to what extent participants would be offended, experienced conflict, and experienced disagreement after their opponent's response.

Conflict management. We used the DUTCH (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001) to assess participants' conflict management intentions. This questionnaire measures the preference for the conflict management strategies of avoiding (e.g., *I avoid a confrontation on our disagreement,* α = .68), dominating (e.g., *I pursue my own goal,* α = .79), compromising (e.g., *I*

insist on compromising, α = .80), integrating (e.g., *I work towards a solution that serves both our purposes,* α = .82), and accommodating (e.g., *I try to accommodate my opponent,* α = .81). Each subscale consists of four items (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Regulatory emotions focus emotions after response. We measured emotions associated with regulatory focus using four items per focus. Participants were asked to what extent they would experience each emotion in the given situation (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). The prevention focus emotions were *calm(r), at ease(r), nervous,* and *agitated* (α = .80). The promotion focus emotions were *content(r), joyful(r), discouraged,* and *upset* (α = .61). Because the emotions pertained to a possibly offensive and therefore negative context, items were recoded as such that higher scores indicated more negative emotional response[11].

Results

Controlling for the type of conflict scenario participants received did not affect any of the results reported below. Therefore, data were collapsed across the two scenarios for further analysis. We performed ANOVAs on all dependent variables with honor condition and response condition as independent variables, unless stated otherwise.

Honor manipulation check. There was only a significant effect of honor condition on activation of honor concerns, $F(1, 70) = 4.41$, $p = .039$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Participants in the high-honor condition reported having significantly higher honor concerns ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.38$) than participants in the low-honor

[11] A factor analysis for all eight emotion items resulted in two factors separating the positive valence items from the negative valence items. However, a factor analysis for the positive valence and negative valence items separately clustered the promotion emotions into one category and the prevention emotions into another for both the positively-valenced and the negatively-valenced items. This was the case for both Study 4.2 and 4.3.

condition (M = 4.13, SD = 1.23); the honor manipulation thus proved to be effective. No other effects were significant (Fs < 1.68, ps > .21)

Regulatory strategy. After reading the scenario, but before reading their opponent's response, participants were asked to report their initial regulatory strategy to deal with the conflict at hand. There was a significant main effect of honor condition on regulatory strategy, $F(1, 70) = 6.29$, $p = .014$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Participants in the high honor condition (M = 5.12, SD = 1.34) reported a stronger inclination to adopt a prevention strategy than participants in the low honor condition (M = 4.35, SD = 1.28). The main effect for response condition and the honor by response interaction were not significant (Fs <1). These results also exclude possible pre-existing regulatory strategy differences in the response conditions before the opponent's response.

Response manipulation check. There was a main effect of response on this measure $F(1, 70) = 7.27$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Participants in the explicit escalation condition took more offense to the conflict (M = 5.24, SD = 1.02) than participants in the implicit escalation condition (M = 4.65, SD = 1.06). The main effect of honor condition and the honor by response interaction were not significant (Fs < 1). These findings confirm that, as intended, participants in both honor conditions considered the explicit response to be more offensive than the implicit response.

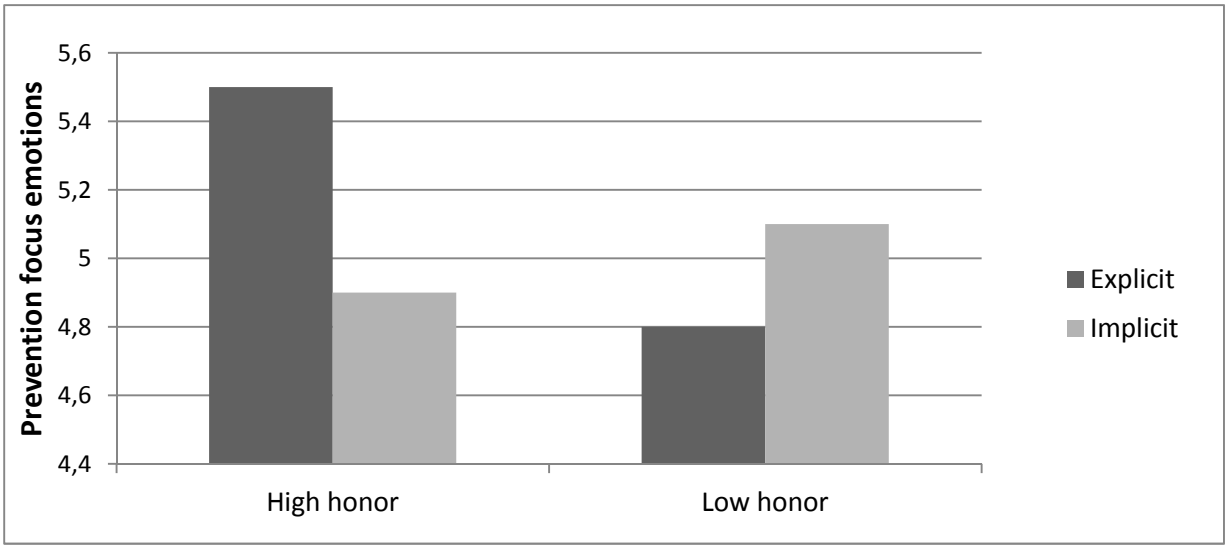
Conflict management. We only found significant main effects for honor condition on the accommodating and dominating conflict strategies. Participants in the high-honor condition reported more accommodating conflict intentions (M = 3.64, SD = 1.16) than participants in the low-honor condition (M = 3.01, SD = 1.21), $F(1, 70) = 3.98$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Additionally, participants in the high-honor condition reported less dominating conflict intentions (M = 3.43, SD = 1.06) than participants in the low-honor condition (M = 4.09, SD = 1.19), $F(1, 70) = 5.79$, $p = .019$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. These results are in line with the reported

regulatory strategy and indicate that in general, participants in the high-honor group favored a more accommodating and less dominating conflict strategy. No other effects were significant (Fs < 2.48, ps > .12)

Mediating effect of regulatory strategy. We then assessed the mediating effect of regulatory strategy on the accommodating and dominating conflict strategies, using bootstrapping (1000 samples) as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004), with honor condition as predictor and regulatory strategy as mediator. Regulatory strategy mediated the effect of honor on accommodating conflict strategies (point estimate of .16, p = .02, 95% CI = .01 - .52) significantly, rendering the original effect of honor on accommodating conflict styles non-significant (p = .13). Regulatory strategy did not mediate the effect of honor condition on the dominating conflict intentions because regulatory strategy did not correlate significantly with this conflict handling style.

Figure 4.1

Honor by insult interaction effect on prevention focus emotions



Regulatory focus emotions after response. There was a marginally significant interaction effect of honor and response type on prevention focus

emotions, $F(1,70) = 3.83$, $p = .054$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Simple effect analyses revealed that prevention focus emotions were higher among high-honor participants than low-honor participants in the explicit escalation condition, $F(1,70) = 5.07$, $p = .027$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, (Figure 4.1), but equal among high honor and low honor participants in the implicit condition, $F = .265$, ns. Thus the explicit response led to more prevention focus emotions, but only in the high-honor condition. As in Study 4.1, there were no significant effects of experimental manipulation on promotion focus emotions. Means (*SD*) for the promotion focus emotions were $M = 5.48$ (.72) in the high-honor condition and $M = 5.56$ (.70) in the low-honor condition. None of the other effects were significant (Fs < 1.51, ps > .22).

Discussion

In the second study, we effectively manipulated participants' honor concerns within a single cultural setting to disentangle honor concerns from other possible cultural differences. We then assessed participant's regulatory strategy in a possibly escalatory situation. Results revealed that activated honor concerns elicited the adoption of prevention strategies. In line with previous work on honor and conflict management (Beersma, et al., 2003; Harinck, et al., 2013), results of this study also showed that those high in honor initially favored a more de-escalatory approach (more accommodating and less dominating tactics) to deal with a possibly escalatory situation.

The current findings add to this work by elucidating the underlying psychological mechanism, since the difference on the accommodating conflict management style was mediated by high honor participants' tendency to adopt a prevention strategy to deal with the situation. Interestingly, we also observed higher levels of prevention focus emotions after the explicit response among those with high honor concerns than those with low honor concerns. This difference was not found in the implicit escalation condition, indicating that the

focus on preventing undesired outcomes becomes even more intensified when possible conflict escalation is more explicit.

We did not find the expected interaction effect indicating more forceful conflict intentions among those high in honor after a disparaging comment was made. Possibly, the negative remark was not strong enough to be highly offensive. According to recent findings, a mild slight is not likely to elicit a hostile response even among those from an honor culture (Cross, et al., 2013).

The current findings are a first step in better understanding the motivations underlying the processes of escalatory vs. de-escalatory behavior among those high in honor. Results point out that when honor concerns are high people initially favor a more de-escalatory approach to a possibly conflictual situation because they want to prevent undesirable outcomes, i.e. conflict escalation and the possible loss of one's honor. Notably, the reported effects were found on two different measures of regulatory focus, across two different conflict scenarios, and both before and after the opponent's response, thereby validating our findings beyond one particular setting.

Study 4.3

Results of Study 4.2 demonstrated that, when honor concerns are salient, the initial approach to a possibly escalatory situation is more likely de-escalatory than when honor is not salient. In Study 4.3 we set out to examine the dynamics of conflict escalation and to identify whether higher levels of aggression are driven by the same mechanism that drives de-escalatory behavior in the earlier stages of conflict. Therefore, in our third study we exposed participants to a more immersive situation in an interactive experiment with multiple insults and actual indicators of aggression. We contrasted responses to insulting feedback with responses to critical but non-insulting feedback as well as with a control condition with neutral feedback. The purpose of this design was to distinguish the effect of insulting feedback from the effect of general negative evaluations.

Because insults are especially harmful for a person's honor (Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2002b), we predicted that when honor concerns were activated, participants would respond particularly aggressively to an insult and less so towards general (non-insulting) negative or neutral feedback. On the other hand, when honor concerns were deactivated, participants would consider negative and insulting feedback both as equally negative, and thus respond with equal levels of aggression, but more so than when receiving neutral feedback.

Participants

A total of 136 students were recruited at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Leiden University to participate in this study. An inspection of the demographic information revealed that eight participants originated from an honor culture. They were excluded from the analysis because of confounding effects of their cultural background with the honor manipulation. Additionally, six more participants were excluded because they expressed explicit suspicion about being paired with an actual participant. Thus, the final data set consisted of 122 participants (89 female, 73 %, M_{age} = 20.81, SD_{age} = 4.32). Gender and age were equally distributed among all four experimental conditions.

Design

This experiment had a 2 (honor condition: low honor vs. high honor) by 3 (feedback condition: neutral vs. negative vs. insulting) between subject design.

Procedure

After consenting, participants took place in a cubicle in the lab and were randomly assigned to one of six conditions. The cover story of this experiment was that participants were taking part in an experiment investigating digital cooperation, for example over email or instant messaging. They were told that they would be randomly paired to another participant, perform two tasks together and answer questions about their performance. We then followed a

similar procedure as in Study 4.2 to manipulate participants' honor concerns, using the two-stepped manipulation.

Task 1: feedback. After the honor manipulation participants performed two 'cooperation' tasks. The first task was a word game during which participants received either neutral, or negative, or insulting feedback about their performance, supposedly from a participant they were randomly paired with. In this task Participant A had to solve ten consecutive word puzzles and send the answers to Participant B. Participant B then used those answers as hints to answer the questions s/he had received. This game was played on three rounds. Participants were told that, in order to replicate the limitations of digital communication, Participant A could only communicate to Participant B by forwarding his or her answers to Participants B. Participant B could only communicate to Participant A by sending feedback to Participant A two times during each series of word puzzles. They were told that assignment to be either Participant A or B was random. However, participants were in fact playing against the computer. All participants were assigned to be Participant A, solve the word puzzles and be on the receiving end of feedback. This cover story was created to have participants believe they were actually working with someone else on a task and to have a credible reason for why they only received (insulting) feedback but were not able to give feedback.

During each series of ten word puzzles participants received feedback twice, adding up to a total of six times. In all feedback conditions, the first and third instances of feedback were task related and similar, indicating what the question was Participant B had to answer. In the remaining instances, participants received either neutral feedback (e.g., "*Are you managing?*"), or negative feedback (e.g., "*This is of no use to me.*") or insulting feedback (e.g., "*You're turning this into a fucking mess.*"). The offensiveness of the feedback was assessed in a pilot study.

Task 2: white noise. The amount of aggression participants displayed was measured during the second task of the study. This task, the Competitive Reaction time Task (CRT; Meier, et al., 2006; Taylor, 1967), followed directly after the first task and was ostensibly performed with the same collaborator. Effectively, in this task participants are able to select the intensity of noise they want to administer to their opponent through a headphone (dB 60 – dB 105) over 25 trials. This task has been validated as a direct measure of aggression in previous studies (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Meier, et al., 2006). We specifically chose this task because it gives a clear indication of the process of escalation as the result of repeated exchanges of aggression over time. We followed the same procedure as outlined by Meier and colleagues (Meier, et al., 2006).

Next, we assessed participants' regulatory-focus-related emotions and the effectiveness of the honor manipulation. To probe for suspicion about the procedure, we included an open-ended question where participants were invited to freely comment on their counterpart and the cooperation tasks. Participants who indicated doubting the credibility of their counterpart were excluded from analysis. Next, participants' demographics were gathered. Finally, participants were debriefed about the actual goal and procedure of the study and rewarded with either course credits or € 3, - for their cooperation.

Measures

Honor manipulation check. For reasons discussed in Study 4.1 and in order to be consistent, we used the same three-item scale as in the previous two studies to assess the effectiveness of the honor manipulation ($\alpha = .78$).

Noise level. The first noise burst administered usually conveys the initial level of aggression, while the level of noise set during the remaining 24 trials indicates the level of aggression displayed by participants in response to the following interaction during the course of the CRT (Bushman & Baumeister,

1998). Therefore, we analyzed the mean noise levels set by participants during the first round and throughout the 24 consecutive rounds as separate indicators of aggression. Both indicators varied between dB 60 (normal conversation level) and dB 105 (fighter jet at 500 feet). In some studies, participants also have the option of selecting zero dB of white noise in case they do not want to administer any white noise at all (Meier, et al., 2006). In our design the minimum level of noise that could be selected was 60 dB. To assess the amount of aggression displayed, we only included responses of those participants who at least once set the noise level above the bare minimum of 60dB[12].

Regulatory focus emotions. We used the same items as in Study 4.2 to measure promotion focus emotions ($\alpha = .83$) and prevention focus emotions ($\alpha = .85$). Although these emotions were measured after the supposed cooperation tasks, we specifically asked participants to what extent they had experienced these emotions during the tasks.

Results

Honor manipulation check. An ANOVA with honor condition and feedback condition as independent variables on the honor concerns scale confirmed the effectiveness of the honor manipulation. Participants in the high-honor condition reported having significantly more honor concerns ($M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.06$) than participants in the low-honor condition ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.32$); $F(1, 116) = 6.67$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. As intended, the main effect of the feedback condition and the honor by feedback interaction effect were not significant (Fs < 1.43, ps > .25).

[12] Analysis of the results including the 19 participants (9 in the high-honor condition), who did not administer any white noise above the minimum 60 dB level revealed similar outcomes, though the contrast effect on white noise in the honor condition (insult vs. negative and neutral feedback) was no longer significant $F(1, 57) = 1.70$, $p = .19$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

Noise level. Because of our specific predictions regarding honor-related responses, we assessed à priori interaction contrasts, comparing the insult condition to the negative and neutral feedback condition in the high-honor group, and comparing the insult and negative feedback condition to the neutral feedback condition in the low-honor group. The average noise levels set in the first and the remaining 24 trials are presented in Table 4.1.

1st trial. We first analyzed the noise level set by participants during the first round of interaction with ANOVA and honor condition and feedback condition as independent variables. Neither the main effects, nor the interaction contrasts were significant (Fs < 1.99, ps > .14). These results seem to suggest that at first, the different kinds of feedback elicit similar kinds of responses in both honor conditions, indicating that the initial levels of aggression displayed are equal.

Table 4.1

Mean dBs of white noise

		1st trial		Remaining 24 trials	
		High-honor	**Low-honor**	**High-honor**	**Low-honor**
Insult	**M**	72.78	75.53	79.92[a]	75.64[a]
	(SD)	(16.99)	(16.40)	(12.27)	(11.78)
Negative	**M**	73.61	70.88	72.19[b]	76.04[a]
	(SD)	(9.20)	(11.35)	(9.78)	(12.05)
Neutral	**M**	69.38	66.33	74.17[b]	70.69[b]
	(SD)	(12.50)	(9.35)	(7.42)	(7.66)

Note. Means within columns with different superscripts differ significantly.

Remaining 24 trials. We then analyzed the average level of noise administered throughout the task using ANOVA with honor condition and feedback condition as independent variables. The main effects of honor and feedback were not significant, although there was an overall trend suggesting that the participants in the insult condition (M = 77.72, SD = 12.05) maintained a heightened level of aggression throughout the task while this was not the case for participants in the neutral feedback condition (M = 72.49, SD = 7.62), $F(2, 97) = 2.34$, $p = .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$; LSD Post-hoc $p = .04$. The negative feedback condition (M = 74.06, SD = 10.99) did not differ from the other two conditions.

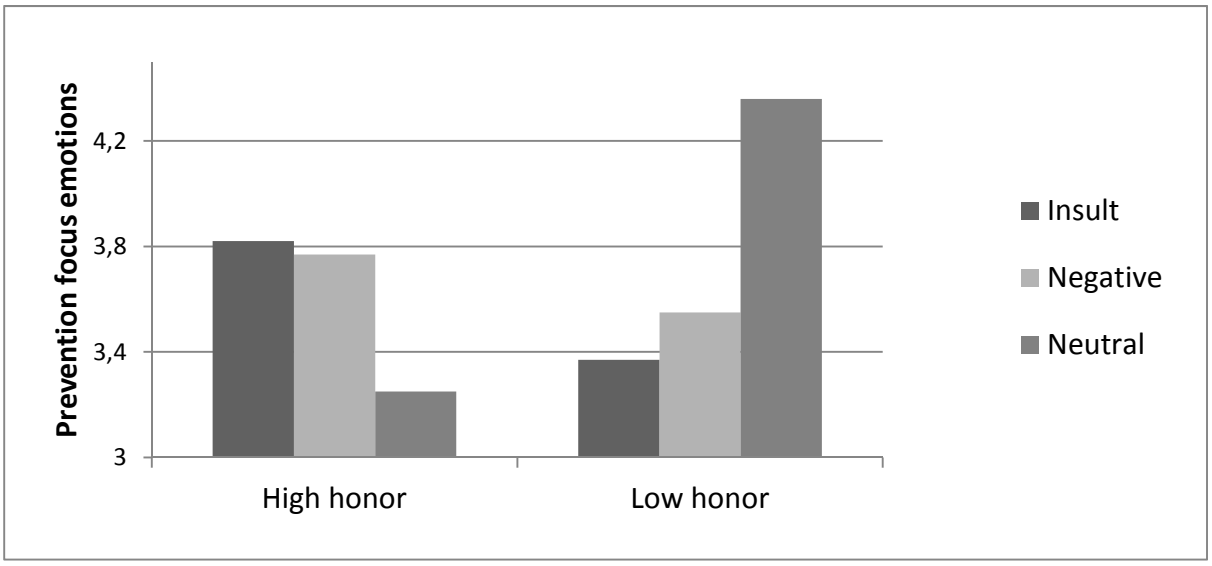
Even though the overall two-way interaction was not significant $F(2, 97) = 1.59$, $p = .21$, we proceeded by assessing the predicted honor by feedback interaction because we had specified a predicted pattern of mean differences in which specific conditions should deviate from the overall pattern. The results of this analysis was consistent with our hypotheses. Most clearly, in the high-honor group the predicted contrast was significant, indicating that those in the insult condition administered significantly higher levels of white noise than those in the negative feedback condition and in the neutral feedback condition, $F(1, 48) = 5.18$, $p = .027$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, (see Table 4.1). In the low-honor condition there was a trend towards our hypothesized outcome, indicating that participants in the insult and negative feedback condition selected higher levels of noise than participants in the neutral feedback conditions, $F(1, 47) = 2.92$, $p = .094$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$.

Regulatory focus emotions. We used ANOVAs to assess differences on the prevention focus and promotion focus emotions with honor condition and insult condition as independent variables. As expected and in line with findings in Study 4.2, only the interaction effect of honor by feedback condition on prevention focus emotions was significant $F(2, 116) = 4.82$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. In the high-honor condition the insulting or negative feedback instigated more

prevention-focus emotions, while in the low-honor condition the neutral feedback instigated more prevention-focus emotions (see Figure 4.2). Simple effect analyses revealed that this effect was particularly driven by differences in the neutral feedback condition $F(1, 116) = 8.18$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. There were no other significant effects on the prevention focus emotions, nor any significant effects on the promotion focus emotions (all Fs < 1). Means (SD) for the promotion focus emotions were $M = 3.32$ (1.12) in the high-honor condition and $M = 3.45$ (1.17) in the low-honor condition.

Figure 4.2

Honor by feedback interaction effect on prevention focus emotion



We also analyzed the correlations between regulatory focus emotions and the white noise intensity set by participants in the high and low-honor condition separately (see Table 4.2). Interestingly, we found different correlations for the two conditions. While promotion focus (but not prevention focus) was positively and significantly correlated with the noise level set by participants in the low-honor condition ($r = .29$, $p = .045$), prevention focus (but not promotion focus)

was positively and marginally correlated with noise levels set by participants in the high-honor condition (r = .25, p = .074).

Table 4.2

Correlations between regulatory focus and level of white noise per honor condition

	High honor		Low honor	
	1st trial	**Average**	**1st trial**	**Average**
Prevention emotions	.15	.25^{+}	.06	03
Promotion emotions	.08	.16	.07	.29*

Note. n = 61 in each honor condition, * $p < .05$; $^{+}$ $p < .1$ (two sided)

Discussion

In this third study, we manipulated both honor concerns and type of feedback in a fully experimental setting and measured actual behavior. Our results replicated those of the previous study, indicating that our honor manipulation successfully activated honor concerns even among participants in a non-honor culture setting.

We used a previously validated aggression measure, that is, administering white noise (Meier, et al., 2006; Taylor, 1967), to determine participants' hostility when interacting with a supposed fellow participant, who had given them insulting, negative, or neutral feedback during a previous task. As hypothesized, we demonstrated that particularly those whose honor concerns were activated reacted more aggressively to insulting feedback than to negative or neutral feedback. Those whose honor concerns were deactivated reacted equally aggressive to both insulting and negative feedback, but displayed more aggression in these conditions than after neutral feedback. Additionally, the

display of higher levels of aggression did not become apparent in the initial responses to the insulting feedback, but after multiple rounds of interaction in which different levels of white noise were exchanged.

The results pertaining to regulatory focus partially corroborated our previous findings. As expected, in the high-honor condition prevention focus emotions were higher in the insulting and negative feedback condition and lower for the neutral condition while this pattern was reversed in the low-honor condition. Additionally, in the high-honor group aggressive responses were significantly correlated with prevention focus emotions, while in the low-honor condition aggression was significantly correlated with promotion focus emotions. These findings suggest that different motivational processes drive responses to insulting feedback when honor concerns are salient or not.

General discussion

In three studies we examined the relation between honor, regulatory focus, and responses to different types of feedback, distinguishing insulting feedback from general negative or neutral feedback. Across three studies we found support for the notion that, particularly in a setting that poses a possible threat to one's social image, honor endorsement is associated with prevention focus. We showed that those high in honor reported higher overall levels of prevention focus, reported higher levels of prevention strategies before engaging in conflict, and reported higher levels of prevention focus emotions after an explicit confrontation, compared to those low in honor. Moreover, we found that among those high in honor prevention focus was associated with initial de-escalatory tactics to deal with a situation in Study 4.2, while it was also associated with aggressive responses to insulting feedback in an open confrontation in Study 4.3.

In sum, when honor concerns are at play, conflict development and escalation consist of two distinct steps. While initial reactions to tensions tend to

be cooperative and obliging to avoid further escalation, responses can become quite hostile after a certain threshold is exceeded (see also Cohen, et al., 1999). Furthermore, we provide initial empirical evidence that the activation of prevention focus constitutes one of the underlying psychological mechanisms that can account for this dynamic. In Study 4.2, the activation of prevention focus strategies mediated the relation between honor activation and accommodating conflict intentions in a situation that had not yet escalated. However, in a more overt and escalatory context, such as in Study 4.3, prevention focus emotions among high-honor participants were correlated to more aggressive reactions to insulting feedback.

These findings have important theoretical implications. To our knowledge, these findings are among the first to connect prevention focus with honor and (defensive) aggression to social devaluations. More specifically, our results provide a possible explanation for seemingly contradictory findings that have been reported in previous research on the relation between honor and cooperative vs. aggressive reactions in a possibly escalatory setting. It seems both types of reactions are prevalent and they are driven by the same underlying motivational considerations, that is to either prevent a possibly honor threatening situation or to restore one's honor one's it has been harmed. As such, these findings contribute to a better understanding of how cultural values, such as honor, affect interpersonal (and probably intergroup) interactions.

Our findings also have important practical implications relevant to the field of intergroup communication and intercultural conflict management. In line with previous research (Beersma, et al., 2003; Cohen, et al., 1996; Harinck, et al., 2013), we found that among those high in honor, there is a considerable difference between the initial approach to possibly insulting situations and reactions to the factual experience of insults. We demonstrate that two different processes might be in operation before and during conflict escalation when

honor is at stake. De-escalatory tactics are adopted at first, but can be followed up by more vigorous responses when the confrontation becomes more explicit and overt. However, there is a risk that people do not correctly detect or interpret these signals during the interaction. Obliging behavior can be misinterpreted as a sign that all is well, while in fact it communicates vigilance. On the other hand, aggression can be interpreted as competitiveness, while in fact it communicates the need to repair one's honor.

This knowledge also means that different interventions tailored to specific stages of conflict might be necessary. For example, affirmation tactics might work in order to prevent loss of honor due to insults in the initial stages of a confrontation and advance constructive competition. However, these interventions probably become useless once conflict has escalated. When this is the case, other measures, such as apologies or penalties by a third party might be more effective to reduce the need for personal retribution. As societies become more and more diverse, and people with different cultural backgrounds meet on a day-to-day basis, understanding their perspective in these situations and predicting their responses as interaction unfolds can help prevent or reduce tensions.

A strength of the current set of studies is that we employed a multi-method approach. In Study 4.1, we used correlational data to compare participants from honor vs. non-honor cultures, while in Study 4.2 and 4.3 honor concerns were experimentally manipulated. Additionally, we used a variety of measures to capture cognitive as well as emotional aspects of regulatory focus. Our dependent measures included self-reports as well as behavioral indicators, enabling us to capture subjective interpretations of the situation and actual reactions.

Notably, we used a newly developed honor manipulation. This manipulation did not only activate honor concerns on a cognitive and emotional

level, but also affected behavior that has been previously linked to culture-based honor endorsement. By using this manipulation within one single cultural group, we were able to separate the effect of honor concerns from other cultural factors. As a result we were able to uncover the underlying psychological mechanisms directly pertaining to honor concerns.

One important limitation however, is that it proved difficult to measure situational variations in regulatory focus following our manipulations by means of the standard measures of regulatory focus. As a result, some of the reported interactions and correlations were weak at best. However, this limitation is common in regulatory focus research (Sassenberg & Woltin, 2008; Summerville & Roese, 2008), as it is difficult to assess situational variances in a subtle indicator such as regulatory focus using self-reports.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our findings highlight that those high in honor initially adopt a more de-escalatory approach to a possible confrontation, but show more aggression once they were actually offended. Additionally, both types of responses are (at least partially) driven by higher levels of prevention focus, or the motivation to prevent an undesirable end-state, the loss of honor.

Appendix 4.1

High honor manipulation

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements

1. Values such as honor and respect are important.
2. I can understand that sometimes people take matters in their own hands when they suffer grievous wrongs.
3. Shame is a useful emotion.
4. It is important that people try and maintain a good reputation.
5. Modesty and courtesy are still important virtues in the current society.
6. I don't want my mistakes to have negative consequences for my family's reputation.
7. I may get worked up when someone insults me intentionally.
8. Making my family proud is important for me.

It is well known that how others think about us greatly affects our self-worth. Think back to a situation where it was important to you to uphold your reputation. Describe that situation and why it was so important to uphold your reputation.

Low honor manipulation

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements

1. Values such as honor and respect are more important than the law.
2. Whenever someone treats me unfairly, I take matters into my own hands.
3. Shame is the most important emotion.
4. People who are not concerned for their reputation do not deserve respect.
5. Modesty and courtesy are the most important virtues in the current society.
6. Every choice I make has direct consequences for the reputation of my family.

7. People will have to answer for the consequences, even in case of the smallest insults.
8. The most important thing is that my family is proud of me.

It is well known that how we think about ourselves strongly affects our self-worth. Think back to a situation where it was important to you to maintain a positive self-image. Describe that situation and why it was so important to maintain a positive self-image.