

Conceptions of Hegemonic Masculinity as a Mediator of Sexism Directed at Women

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ABSTRACT – This article analyses the relationship between masculine identity and ambivalent sexism, considering concepts of masculinity and culture of honour as mediating variables in this relationship. For this purpose, two studies were carried out with male participants from two regions of Brazil, Midwest (119 participants) and Northeast (117 participants). The results indicated that the concepts of masculinity are mediators of the relationship between masculine identity and ambivalent sexism. In contrast, the culture of honour did not remain significant in the mediation model. We conclude that the conception of masculinity based on hegemonic precepts of gender restates masculine superiority in detriment to the feminine, naturalizes sexism and violent behaviour for maintenance of masculine identity.

KEYWORDS: masculinity, sexism, prejudice, social identity, culture of honour

Concepções de Masculinidade Hegemônica como Mediadora do Sexismo Direcionado às Mulheres

RESUMO – Este artigo analisa a relação entre identidade masculina e sexismo ambivalente, tomando as concepções de masculinidade e a cultura da honra como variáveis mediadoras dessa relação. Para alcançar este objetivo, foram realizados dois estudos com participantes homens de duas regiões do país, Centro-oeste (119 participantes) e Nordeste (117 participantes). Os resultados indicaram que as concepções de masculinidade são mediadoras da relação entre identidade masculina e o sexismo ambivalente. Em contraste, a cultura da honra não se manteve significativa no modelo da mediação. Conclui-se que a concepção de uma masculinidade, baseada em preceitos hegemônicos de gênero, reafirma a superioridade masculina em detrimento à feminina, e naturaliza práticas de sexismo e comportamentos violentos em defesa da manutenção da identidade masculina.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: masculinidade, sexismo, preconceito, identidade social, cultura da honra

Data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime World Report (2019) show that in 2017, about 87,000 women were murdered in the world, more than half of them (58%) by intimate partners or other family members. Thus, every day, 137 women die victims of femicide. The report points out the relationship between male gender and violence, noting that for every ten homicide cases, in approximately nine the aggressors are men, and that for every ten victims of homicides committed by intimate partners, more than eight are female. In Brazil, the incidence of violence, including murder, against women has alarming numbers. According to the Atlas da Violência (2020), between 2017 and 2018, although the rate of homicides against women dropped by

9.3%, the number of homicides that took place at home, classified as femicide, increased by 6.6%.

More recently, with the social isolation caused by Covid-19, this number has increased. The pandemic has had global impact, exacerbating existing inequalities. According to UN Women (2020), there has been an increase in cases of domestic violence around the world, with women as the main victims. In Brazil, according to a study carried out by the Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (2021), one in each four adult women (24.4%) say they have suffered some type of violence or aggression in the last 12 months, a period which corresponds to the Covid-19 pandemic. This means that around 17 million women have suffered

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physical, psychological or sexual violence in the last year. It is noteworthy that most women suffered violence in their own home, and the aggressors are people known to the victim. These two elements stand out in recent research.

Various studies have found that among the main explanatory factors of violence against women are socioeconomic inequality, sexism and the maintenance of a hegemonic masculine identity, defined as a social status that must be conquered and maintained through publicly verifiable actions, avoiding associations with the feminine of their

behavioural, linguistic and emotional repertoires (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). However, studies have not considered the mediating role that conceptions of masculinity and the culture of honour have in the relationship between male identity and sexism, emphasizing that the “culture of honour” is one of the main causes of violence against women in many cultures (Souza, 2015; Souza, et al., 2017; Souza, et al., 2016). In this article, we analyse the relationship between masculine identity and sexism, considering concepts of masculinity and the culture of honour as mediating variables of this relationship.

MASCULINE IDENTITY, CULTURE OF HONOUR AND SEXISM

Masculine identity is very important in the conception of being a man. Masculinity is not just the cultural formulation of a natural trait; it is a continuous and conflictive process of social construction (Welzer-Lang, 2001). Masculinity is a generic but not universal concept; it depends on the society in which it is inserted. Therefore, more than one type of masculinity can be found within a cultural environment, with different understandings of coexisting other masculinities. Their social construction follows a hierarchical logic, defining dominant and dominated male forms.

The cultural consequence of this hierarchical structuring is the imposition of a dominant, normative, ideal way of being “man”, that is, hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013) or a traditional ideology of masculinity (Levant, 1996). It is a patriarchal model of masculinity built on two interrelated fields of power relations: in the relationships of men with women, marked by gender inequalities, and in the relationships of men with other men, characterized by inequalities of race, class and sexual orientation, among others.

Masculinity, besides being a parameter to rank male behaviours, is a series of socially shared practices and symbols, valued as ideals. The hegemonic ideal of masculinity has as its main values the power of men over women (female submission); the association of masculinity with virility and physical strength; the need to be a provider and show courage; as well as avoiding any attribute linked to the female world, so as not to run the risk of “losing” the masculinity identity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013; Kimmel, 1998).

According to social identity theory, identities are assumed from the symbolic conflict between the groups to which people belong and the groups to which they do not belong, simultaneously with the tendency to overvalue their group and devalue that of others (Tajfel, 1983). From this perspective, the construction of one gender is interdependent of construction of the other, that is, for a man to learn what it is to be a man, he must know what it means to be a woman.

There is evidence that masculine identification can lead to the exclusion of feminine traits, producing an identity gap with the feminine universe (Bosson & Michniewicz, 2013; Guerra, et al., 2015). The maintenance of this process is permanently monitored, above all self-monitored. A man is socially supervised and must, by this logic, avoid non-male postures and always provide evidence of his masculinity (Welzer-Lang, 2001). It is a kind of “precarious” masculinity, in which masculinity demands more social achievements than femininity (Vandello et al., 2008). In a study where the participants were asked how they lost this status, they mentioned reasons more related to social causes (losing a job) and physical reasons (loss of strength with age). The results showed that masculinity (more than femininity) was seen as an unstable status, which must always be pursued, and which can be quickly lost (Vandello, et al., 2008).

Men’s behaviours, especially those most identified with hegemonic masculinity, are often motivated by a continuing need to prove status by asserting a traditional masculine image. This pattern may have implications for attitudes and practices related to sexist violence (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Such concerns with this type of masculinity are common in many cultures (Gilmore, 1990), demonstrating the existence of certain notion of male “honour” as a central element of the social fabric. However, the existence and maintenance of cultures of honour depends on certain historical and material conditions.

For centuries, the US South was considered more violent than the North. People who lived in the American South and in some parts of the West showed concerns related to their reputation not present in other regions (Cohen & Nisbett, 1996). These regions had, in their history, an economy based on livestock and agriculture, a poorer population with low education (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Henry, 2009).

In societies that adopt the postulates of a culture of honour, social norms and practices are important for the maintenance of honour, both male and female. There is, however, special

attention to male honour, implying strict regulation of female behaviour. In these cultures, men's status is associated with the need to appear strong and able to respond to supposed threats to masculinity or to family. Women, on the other hand, are encouraged to have characteristics that endorse traditional gender roles. Thus, men often feel justified in exercising aggressive control of their partners and the other females in their family; while women are encouraged to endure such treatment, also as a matter of female honour and reputation (Rodríguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002; Rodríguez Mosquera, Fischer, Manstead, & Zaalber, 2008). In this way, men's tendency to value and defend their masculinity can produce serious consequences, including sexist attitudes and destructive behaviour to reinforce social and gender inequality (Glick, Wilkerson, & Cuffe 2015).

The notion that traditional or hegemonic masculinity is a problematic form of social identification has been reported in many studies, such as, for example: the relationship between the endorsement of this ideology and higher degrees of alexithymia (Levant et al., 2006), emotional restraint (Guerra et al., 2014; Levant et al., 2006; Oransky & Fisher, 2009), excessive alcohol consumption (Capraro, 2000), and reluctance to seek health services (Gomes & Nascimento, 2006). Other studies show that this form of masculinity increases the possibility that men perceive their identity as threatened (Vandello & Bosson, 2013), making them more prone to aggression (Vandello & Cohen, 2003) and sexual harassment (Giordano et al., 2006; Wade & Brittan-Powell, 2001).

The studies about masculinity conceptions have used some instruments. The Conceptions of Masculinity Scale (CMS), developed by Oransky and Fischer (2009) and adapted to the Brazilian context by Guerra et al. (2015), is one of the most important. It focuses on measuring compliance with gender norms, based on three theoretical dimensions: I) emotional restraint, based on the idea that, for the individual to be considered male, he must hide his emotions and not appear vulnerable (Guerra et al., 2014; Levant et al., 2006; Oransky & Fisher, 2009); II) heterosexism, which is the belief that any type of behaviour by men that can be considered feminine is not acceptable, legitimizing the discourse of normalization of heterosexuality (Herek, 2004; Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Scardua & Souza Filho, 2006); and III) social provocation, which considers provocation among men to be a natural behaviour, which must be accepted as part of the process of "being a man" (Guerra et al., 2014). These dimensions allow understanding the phenomenon of masculinity when dealing with the constant effort involved in maintaining the social role of the male gender (Guerra et al., 2014; Oransky & Fisher, 2009).

Studies using the Conceptions of Masculinity Scale in the Brazilian context have found there is negative association

between social provocation and social desirability (Guerra et al., 2014), and also a significant association with family culture of honour and male honour (Guerra et al., 2014; Guerra et al., 2015). Thus, conceptions of masculinity are associated with men's reputation in their relationships with other people. To the extent that men are more sensitive than women to the demand for public action to maintain gender identity, these prescriptive masculine ideologies are linked to traditional gender-biased attitudes such as sexism and homophobia (Glick et al., 2015).

Sexism is concerned with hostility towards women. Nevertheless, it is an ambivalent phenomenon, encompassing two dimensions: hostile sexism, characterized as more flagrant, which consists of rejection, antipathy and intolerance towards the female role; and the more covert, benevolent sexism, which endorses the complementary nature of gender differences, paternalistic behaviours, and beliefs in heterosexual intimacy (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). Studies have shown that traditional masculine conceptions and adherence to the culture of honour increase the propensity for sexist, benevolent and hostile attitudes (Saucier et al., 2016), sexually aggressive behaviours (Brown et al., 2018), delegitimizing sexually abused women (Saucier et al., 2015), and acceptance of intimate partner violence (Dorothee et al., 2013).

Brazil, despite being classified as a country with high adherence to the culture of honour, has great social, cultural and identity variety. So, what is meant by honour, what is defined as being an honourable person or about worrying in relation to personal honour, undergoes changes according to the culture and the social role played by citizens in a given context (Araújo, 2016; Johnson & Lipsett-Rivera, 1998). It can be assumed there are significant differences between regions and cultural areas of country, considering the relationship between historic and economic conditions.

The main purpose of this article is to analyse the relationship between male identity and ambivalent sexism, taking the concepts of masculinity and the culture of honour as mediating variables in two regions of Brazil with different economic and cultural backgrounds. Our general hypothesis is that greater masculine identity will imply greater ambivalent sexism only when there is stronger adherence to traditional (exclusive) conceptions of masculinity and culture of honour. Two studies were carried out to test this hypothesis: one, in an urban context (Brasília); and the other in a rural and traditionalist context (Sertão Nordestino). The choice of the Sertão is due to the fact that it is a region where masculinity is one of the constitutive elements of identity, and where the economy and social organization is based on farming and livestock breeding, with strong presence of violence and social inequalities (Albuquerque Junior, 2013), characteristics

indicating of the presence of a culture of honour (Cohen & Nisbett, 1996). Various studies have found that the Northeast

has strong presence of the culture of honour (Souza, 2015; Souza et al., 2017; Souza et al., 2016).

STUDY I

Method

Participants

In the first study, 119 students from a public university in Brasilia participated, all male, aged between 18 and 35 years ($M=19.6$; $SD=2.18$), majoring in different exact sciences. As for sexual orientation, 89.9% of the participants declared themselves to be heterosexual, 6.7% bisexual and 3.4% homosexual. Regarding religion, 65% said they were religious: 42% Catholic, 11% Evangelical, 3.4% Spiritualist and 0.8% Buddhist. Regarding income, 10.9% had monthly income of up to 2 thousand reais, 37.8% between 2 and 10 thousand reais and the rest (51.3%), above 10 thousand.

Instruments

The questionnaire was structured in three parts. The first one was composed of questions on sociodemographic status: sex, age, family income, religious belief and academic major; followed by a free recall question, based on the Psychosocial Identity Inventory (Zavalloni, 1984). The question aimed to evoke the first impressions from the induction "Being masculine means...", also requesting an attribution to the mentioned characteristic (positive, negative or neutral), and whether or not this applies to the participant himself. Based on the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1983), from the valences of each evocation, we built an identity indicator, ranging from -5 (no identification) to 5 (strong identification) referring to the identity representation of the participants in relation to gender ($M = .72$ $SD= 2.74$)

The Conceptions of Masculinity Scale was developed by Oransky and Fisher (2009), and validated in Brazil by Guerra et al. (2014). It is composed of 16 items, whose answers range from 1 (I totally disagree) to 4 (I totally agree). Items were grouped into the three dimensions of masculinity: heterosexism (e.g., real men never act like girls; having effeminate mannerisms makes a man seem less a man); social provocation (e.g., it is normal for men to make fun of their friends; to be accepted men must be able to make fun of others), and emotional restraint (e.g., men should not talk about their concerns with each other; when a man is afraid, he should keep it to himself). The instrument obtained satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = .83$ $M = 1.75$ $SD= 0.41$) and in its three dimensions: heterosexism ($\alpha = .83$

$M=1.35$ $SD= 0.50$), social provocation ($\alpha = .70$ $M=2.30$ $SD= 0.68$) and emotional restraint ($\alpha = .54$ $M = 1.25$ $SD= 0.36$).

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), which was originally prepared by Glick and Fiske (1996) and was adapted to the Brazilian context by Formiga, Gouveia and Santos (2002), is composed of 22 items that assess two dimensions of sexism: hostile sexism (e.g., women are too easily offended; feminist women make completely unreasonable demands on men), and benevolent sexism (e.g., women must be loved and protected by men; a man is incomplete without a woman partner). For the answers, we used the same amplitude as the previous scale. The ISA showed satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$ $M = 1.73$ $SD=0.50$). The consistency of the dimensions of sexism was also satisfactory: hostile ($\alpha = .87$ $M = 1.68$ $SD= 0.60$) and benevolent ($\alpha = .76$ $M = 1.78$ $SD= 0.52$).

The Marital Honour Inventory (MHI) was constructed to elicit feelings about marital infidelity. The instrument described a heterosexual couple in which the wife was having an extramarital affair. Participants were then asked to assess possible attitudes of the husband, using percentages (from 0% to 100%) of expression of a list of 13 behaviours (e.g., avoiding being seen in public; being aggressive with who was disclosing the situation), with 0% not likely and 100% extremely likely. The instrument showed satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$ $M = 10.23$ $SD= 9.58$).

Procedure

Data collection was performed in the classroom by the professor in charge. After being informed of the objectives of the study, the students were invited to participate and informed about the voluntary nature of the research. Prospective participants received a free and informed consent form according to the model stated in National Education Council (CNE) Resolution 510/2016. The administration of the instruments was performed collectively and had average duration of 20 minutes. Data collection took place between April and May 2019.

Data analysis

The statistical analysis of the data was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Process software developed by Hayes (2013), for the

analysis of mediations. The procedures of Baron and Kenny (1986) were followed, in which the analysis of mediation is performed from a set of multiple regressions, so that the mediation effect occurs when the following conditions are satisfied: (1) there is an effect of the independent variable (IV) on the dependent variable (DV); (2) there is an effect of IV on the mediating variable (MV); (3) there is a significant effect of MV on DV; and (4) the effect of IV on DV becomes weaker, or even disappears, when the mediating variable is placed in the analysis model.

Results and Discussion

At first, hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to verify the impact of the proposed variables on ambivalent sexism. The analysis was carried out in stages. Initially, we used the sociodemographic variables in the first model [$F(5, 118) = 5.92, p < 0.001; R^2 = 0.17$]. In the second model, we used the attitudinal variables [$F(5, 96) = 23, 28, p < 0.001; R^2 = 0.53$]. The third model, which included all variables in the analysis, was the most explanatory of ambivalent sexism, explaining 58% of the variance. The diagnosis of multicollinearity indicated that, although some predictor variables were moderately correlated, there was no multicollinearity, since the variance inflation factors (VIF) were all below 10 and tolerance indices were also appropriate for the regression (Salvian, 2016).

In the first regression, we found that among the set of sociodemographic variables, only heterosexual orientation resulted in more sexism. In the second analysis, only the attitudinal variables regressing, the explained variance was 53%, all of which resulted from the three concepts of masculinity. That is, the higher the scores for heterosexism, social provocation, and emotional restraint, the higher the sexism scores were. Masculine identity and adherence to the culture of honour had no significant effects. Finally, in the third regression analysis, when the attitudinal and sociodemographic variables were included together, there was an increase in the explained variance of sexism with the addition of the variables of the second model, on the order of 41% ($\Delta R^2 = 0.58 - 0.17$). This result demonstrated the greater importance of attitudinal variables, specifically conceptions of masculinity, than sociodemographic status in predicting sexism, which lost predictive power ($\Delta R^2 = 5\%$). Such data indicated that the participants conformed to the hegemonic male gender role norms, so the more an individual adhered to premises of this traditional masculinity, the more he endorsed sexist practices (Table 1).

In order to test our hypothesis that the relationship between male identity and ambivalent sexism would be mediated by the participants' conceptions of masculinity and adherence to the culture of honour, we carried out a sequential mediation test, using the Process software (Hayes, 2013), considering the model conceptual number 6, with two mediators. The analysis procedures were those used for models with multiple mediators, and we used the bootstrap method, simulating 5000 samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Figure 1 shows there was complete mediation of conceptions of masculinity in the relationship between male identity and ambivalent sexism (standardized indirect effect: 0.229, 95% CI = 0.112 – 0.334). Indeed, the direct relationship between male identity and ambivalent sexism, which was significant ($r = 0.33$), became non-significant ($r = 0.10$). The culture of honour did not mediate the relationship between male identity – ambivalent sexism: indirect effect = -0.01, 95% CI = -0.05 – 0.03. Likewise, and differently from what we had hypothesized, the sequential mediation of the conceptions of masculinity and culture of honour was also not significant: indirect effect = 0.00, 95% CI = -0.02 – 0.04.

The mediation found partially confirmed our hypothesis, demonstrating that the direct effect of masculine identity on ambivalent sexism disappeared when conceptions of masculinity were introduced, that is, the adoption of conceptions of a traditional or hegemonic masculinity affected made the identification with the masculinity produce prejudice against women.

The result suggests that the participants conformed to the hegemonic male gender role norms, reproducing an identity representation constructed simultaneously in opposition to what is attributed to the feminine, characterizing a detachment from the behaviours and attitudes traditionally considered “feminine”, either containing their emotions or reaffirming their masculinity. Thus, the data demonstrated that the endorsement of components of this type of masculinity were predictors of sexist behaviours, increasing the probability of the individual having prejudiced attitudes against women.

Contrary to what we expected, the culture of honour, although positively and significantly associated with conceptions of masculinity, was not related to sexism in the sample studied, so it did not act as a mediator between this variable and masculine identity. And the negative relationship between a culture of honour and masculine identity still drew attention. Thus, we proposed to carry out the study in a region of the country that is strongly associated with a culture of honour, the “Sertão”.

Table 1
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (Enter Method) to Explain Ambivalent Sexism (n = 119).

Sociodemographic variables					Collinearity test	
Variables	B	B	t-Statistic	p.	Tol.	VIF
(Constant)	1.72		3.20	0.002	–	–
Age	0.02	0.11	1.25	0.213	0.898	1.11
Religion	-0.10	-0.10	-0.78	0.403	0.403	2.48
Religious identity	0.03	0.23	1.79	0.075	0.398	2.51
Family income	-0.01	-0.10	-1.22	0.224	0.889	1.13
Sexual orientation	-0.34	-0.20	-2.35	0.020	0.907	1.10

R-Squared = 0.20; Adjusted R-squared = 0.17; F(5, 118) = 5.92; p < 0.000

Attitudinal variables					Collinearity test	
Variables	B	B	t-Statistic	p.	Tol.	VIF
(Constant)	0.33		2.14	0.035	–	–
Heterosexism	0.40	0.39	4.22	0.000	0.549	1.82
Emotional restraint	0.37	0.25	2.90	0.005	0.613	1.63
Social provocation	0.16	0.22	2.61	0.011	0.654	1.53
Adherence to culture of honour	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.983	0.777	1.29
Male identity	0.01	0.09	1.21	0.229	0.657	1.52

R-Squared = 0.56; Adjusted R-squared = 0.53; F(5, 96) = 23.28; p < 0.000

All Variables					Collinearity test	
Variables	B	B	t-Statistic	p.	Tol.	VIF
(Constant)	0.77		1.66	0.869	–	–
Age	0.02	0.87	1.20	0.230	0.852	1.17
Religion	0.01	0.01	0.11	0.908	0.402	2.49
Religious identity	0.03	0.22	2.11	0.037	0.388	2.58
Family income	-0.01	-0.08	-1.55	0.250	0.790	1.27
Sexual orientation	-0.08	-0.05	-0.72	0.469	0.826	1.21
Heterosexism	0.27	0.26	2.68	0.009	0.439	2.28
Emotional restraint	0.34	0.23	2.68	0.009	0.560	1.79
Social provocation	0.20	0.28	3.14	0.002	0.551	1.82
Adherence to culture of honour	0.00	0.04	0.56	0.575	0.637	1.57
Male identity	0.01	0.09	1.22	0.222	0.735	1.36

R-Squared = 0.62; Adjusted R-squared = 0.58; F(10, 96) = 14.27; p < 0.000

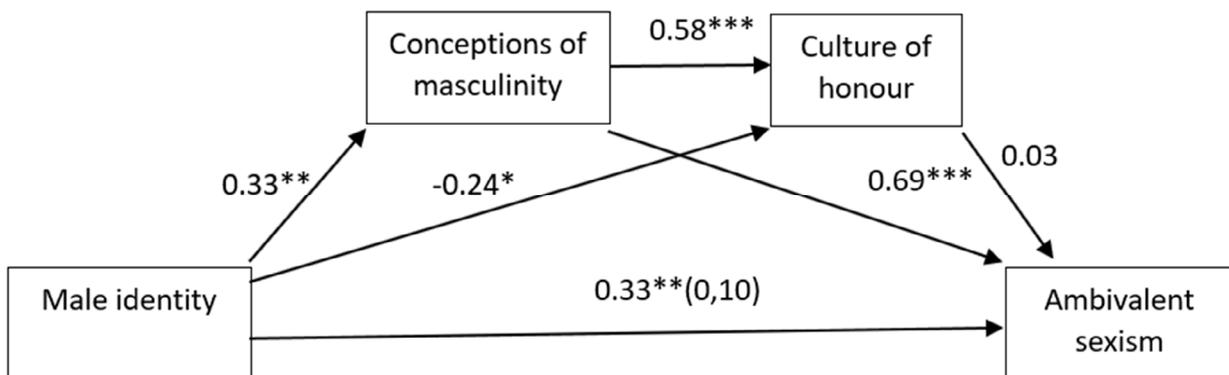


Figure 1 Sequential Mediation Test - Study 1

Note. Mediation considering the concepts of masculinity and the culture of honour as mediators of the relationship between male identity and ambivalent sexism (n = 119). *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

STUDY 2

Method

Participants

The study had a sample composed of 117 students majoring in agronomy and other agricultural sciences at a university in the Northeast hinterlands, all male, aged between 17 and 32 years ($M = 21.9$; $SD = 3.26$), and residents of 14 municipalities located in the semiarid region, based on the territorial delimitation established by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). Regarding sexual orientation, 91.5% declared themselves to be heterosexual, 5.1% homosexual, and 2.6% bisexual. As for religion, 65% of the participants were Catholics, 7.7% Evangelicals/Protestants, 2.6% Spiritualist, one participant professed belief in Candomblé and 24.8% of the participants said they had no religion. In terms of income, 71.8% reported having a monthly family income of up to 2,000 reais, while 17.1% had an income of 2,000 to 4,000 reais per month. Only 11.2% claimed to have an income of more than 4 thousand reais.

Instruments

The participants answered the same questionnaire as in Study 1. In this study, however, we added an item in which we asked “Being a countryman means...”. The masculine identity was high ($M = 2.78$ $SD = 2.41$), and the northeast (sertanejo) identity was even higher ($M = 3.14$ $SD = 2.25$). The Conceptions of Masculinity Scale obtained a mean adherence of 1.92 ($SD = 0.52$) and good internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$). The heterosexism subscale also obtained satisfactory consistency ($\alpha = .81$ $M = 1.97$ $SD = 0.70$). However, the dimensions emotional restraint ($\alpha = .59$ $M = 1.65$ $SD = 0.59$) and social provocation ($\alpha = .51$ $M = 2.07$ $SD = 0.65$) presented internal consistency between low and moderate, converging with the results obtained by Guerra et al. (2014), in which the dimensions in question showed consistency lower than the dimension heterosexism.

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ISA) showed satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = .83$ $M = 2.47$ $SD = 11.52$), as did its dimensions: hostile ($\alpha = .84$ $M = 2.46$ $SD = 0.52$) and benevolent ($\alpha = .73$ $M = 2.48$ $SD = 0.58$). The Marital Honour Inventory (IHC) also showed satisfactory internal consistency for the personal honour scale ($\alpha = .75$ $M = 15.1$ $SD = 11.81$).

Procedure and data analysis

The same as in study 1, data collection took place between October and November 2018. The analyses used the same software as in study 1.

Results and Discussion

Following the same procedure as in Study 1, linear regressions were performed (Enter method) to verify the impact of the variables collected on ambivalent sexism. Initially, the model with sociodemographic variables was not significant [$F(5, 116) = 1.70$, $p = 0.14$; $R^2 = 0.03$], following the second model with the scales and identity scores of the participants, both male and countrymen [$F(6, 116) = 17.38$, $p < 0.000$; $R^2 = 0.46$]. And finally, the third regression model, explained 44% of the variance [$F(11, 104) = 8.46$, $p < 0.000$; $R^2 = 0.44$]. We proceeded again to the diagnosis of multicollinearity, which indicated low or moderate correlations between the predictor variables, without the presence of multicollinearity (Table 2).

In the first regression, we found that, among the set of sociodemographic variables, only heterosexual orientation resulted in more sexism. In the second analysis, when regressing only the attitudinal variables, the explained variance was 46%, resulting from the conceptions of heterosexist masculinity and emotional restraint, as well as the honour identity. That is, the higher the scores of heterosexism, social provocation and emotional restraint and sertanejo identity, the higher the sexism scores were. Masculine identity, social provocation and adherence to the culture of honour had no significant effects. In the third regression analysis, when all variables were included, there was no increase in the explained variance of sexism, which was around 46% in the second model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.44 - 0.03$). This result confirmed, as in the first study, the greater importance of attitudinal variables, now with the entry of the sertanejo identity and the loss of strength of social provocation.

Again, to test our hypothesis in a context of more traditional and patriarchal social organization, we performed a sequential mediation test, following the same procedures as in Study 1.

Figure 2 shows that, like in Study 1, there was a total mediation of conceptions of masculinity in the relationship between male identity and ambivalent sexism (standardized indirect effect = 0.118, 95% CI = 0.005 – 0.215). Likewise, the culture of honour did not act as a mediator of male identity – ambivalent sexism relationship, indirect effect = 0.01, 95% CI = -0.03 – 0.01. Also, the sequential mediation of the conceptions of masculinity and culture of honour was not significant (indirect effect = 0.00, 95% CI = -0.00 – 0.02).

As in Study 1, the mediation found partially confirmed our hypothesis, demonstrating that the direct effect of male identity on ambivalent sexism disappeared when conceptions of masculinity were introduced, that is, it was the adoption of excluding conceptions of masculinity, based on traditionalist

Table 2. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (Enter Method) to Explain Ambivalent Sexism (n = 117).

Sociodemographic variables					Collinearity test	
Variables	B	B	t-Statistic	p.	Tol.	VIF
(Constant)	3.02	-0.05	6.76	0.000	–	–
Age	-0.00	0.07	-0.60	0.548	0.959	1.04
Religion	0.09	0.02	0.70	0.480	0.784	1.28
Religious identity	0.00	0.02	0.22	0.825	0.767	1.30
Family income	0.01	-0.24	0.29	0.771	0.977	1.02
Sexual orientation	-0.48		-2.64	0.009	0.971	1.03
R-Squared = 0.071; Adjusted R-squared = 0.03; F(5, 116) = 1.70; p = 0.14						
Attitudinal variables					Collinearity test	
Variables	B	B	t-Statistic	p.	Tol.	VIF
(Constant)	1.24	0.50	8.15	0.000	–	–
Heterosexism	0.37	0.22	5.69	0.000	0.596	1.68
Emotional restraint	0.20		2.86	0.005	0.762	1.31
Social provocation	-0.02	-0.03	-0.37	0.709	0.884	1.13
Adherence to culture of honour	0.00	0.05	0.64	0.526	0.780	1.28
Male identity	0.01	0.05	0.65	0.515	0.831	1.20
Sertanejo identity	0.05	0.19	2.56	0.012	0.851	1.18
R-Squared = 0.49; Adjusted R-squared = 0.46; F(6, 116) = 17.38; p < 0.000						
All Variables					Collinearity test	
Variables	B	B	t-Statistic	p.	Tol.	VIF
(Constant)	1.12		2.33	0.022	–	–
Age	0.00	0.01	0.17	0.859	0.854	1.17
Religion	-0.01	-0.01	-0.10	0.915	0.679	1.47
Religious identity	0.00	0.04	0.45	0.652	0.689	1.45
Family income	0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.992	0.939	1.07
Sexual orientation	0.02	0.00	0.10	0.919	0.805	1.24
Heterosexism	0.38	0.51	5.08	0.000	0.531	1.88
Emotional restraint	0.20	0.23	2.58	0.011	0.675	1.48
Social provocation	-0.02	-0.02	-0.27	0.787	0.835	1.20
Adherence to culture of honour	0.00	0.04	0.52	0.603	0.703	1.42
Male identity	0.00	0.03	0.38	0.705	0.751	1.33
Sertanejo identity	0.05	0.20	2.53	0.013	0.797	1.26

R-Squared = 0.50; Adjusted R-squared = 0.44; F(11, 104) = 8.46; p < 0.001.

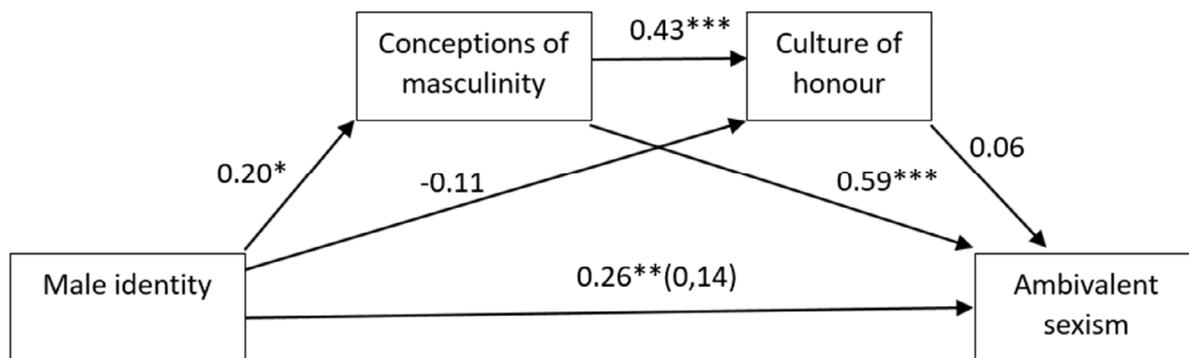


Figure 2. Sequential Mediation Test - Study 2

Note. Mediation considering the concepts of masculinity and the culture of honour as mediators of the relationship between male identity and ambivalent sexism (n = 117). *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

models of masculinity, which made the identification with masculine produce prejudice against women. However, in this study, because the sample was drawn from a traditionalist context, the region in which most research on honour culture is concentrated in Brazil (Souza, 2015; Souza et al., 2016; Souza et al., 2017), and because we believe that masculinity is an important constitutive element of this regional identity (Albuquerque Junior, 2013), our expectation that the culture of honour was strongly linked to masculine identity and sexism was greater.

As a result, we decided to test the effect of sertanejo identity, taking it as a mediating variable, together with conceptions of masculinity and the culture of honour, of the relationship between male identity and sexism, in an analysis of triple sequential mediation. Figure 3 shows that the introduction of the sertanejo identity as a mediating variable in the relationship between male identity and sexism changed the pattern found in Study 1. The mediation of masculinity conceptions was no longer significant (95% CI = -0, 01 – 0.22), and the mediation of sertanejo identity became significant (standardized indirect effect: 0.065, 95% CI = 0.001 – 0.304). None of the other mediations were significant. This result demonstrates that male identification was positively associated with sertanejo identity, which, in turn, was related to ambivalent sexism.

From a triple sequential mediation analysis, by inserting the sertanejo identity, the pattern seen in Study 1 changed. The results indicated that as the participant associated their masculine identity with the Northeastern region, they tended more strongly to endorse ambivalent sexism. Therefore, the image of the Northeast, and in particular the Sertão, directly influenced the way of being and behaving of its inhabitants, because since they share the core of these representations, they characterize and define their regional identity (Gimenez, 1997). Being a sertanejo also means sharing the stereotypes related to the Sertão and its people, which permeate the

popular imagination. In this way, the participants brought the representation of a man with conservative, rustic, rough and “masculine” customs, characteristics from biogeographic-based discourses disseminated by regionalist discourses of the early 20th century, a stereotype resulting from adaptation to a hostile environment and a model of virile masculinity generalized in the region, also known as “macho goat” (Albuquerque Junior, 2013).

With this in mind, we believe that due to the similarity between the attributes shared by the sertanejo and masculine social identity, it is likely that this identity intersection (Roccas & Brewer, 2009) configures a “maximized” representation of an ideal of hegemonic masculinity, being a valued and sought after characteristic within the possibilities of regional identities.

The relationship of these identities with sexism takes place mainly in the sharing of the belief in a patriarchal social organization and an idealized vision of women as romantic objects, submissive to men, thus allying traditional social gender roles, and legitimizing practices of violence against women (Ferreira, 2014; Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). However, the hypothesis that the culture of honour would also be a mediator of the relationship was not confirmed. In fact, we found a negative relationship between honour culture and male identity, possibly due to the approach of the instrument that deals with the defence of honour related to explicit physical violence (e.g., assaulting or killing the partner who brought “dishonour”). Thus, since physical aggression is the most recognized modality of violence against women by men (Cecchetto, et al., 2016), antisexist norms may have been triggered, reducing the propensity to present honour defence behaviours, in this context.

In addition, we expected that the culture of honour would present itself differently in the Sertão, because in addition to studies in the region, the territory has the specific historical and material conditions for the development of this culture.

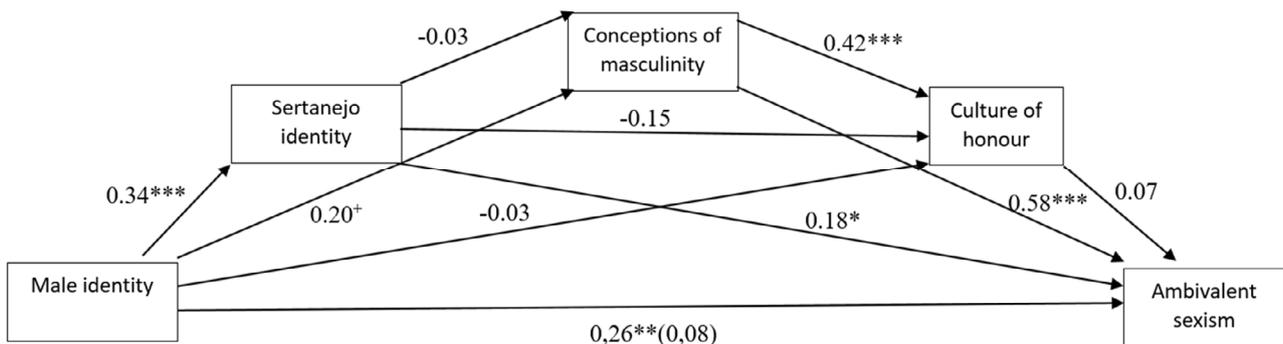


Figure 3. Study 2 Sequential Mediation Test, Introducing the Sertanejo Identity Variable

Note. Mediation considering the countryside identity, the concepts of masculinity and the culture of honour as mediators of the relationship between masculine identity and ambivalent sexism (n = 117). +p = 0.06; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

However, a study prepared by Tomas (2016), carrying out cross-referencing of data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) on Brazil, found great variability of honour between municipalities, possibly due to the continental dimensions of the country. The results of that study demonstrated there are attitudes of honour in the South, where social and structural conditions are not necessarily as severe as in the Northeast. Thus, even though Brazil as a whole is considered to have a culture of honour (Johnson

& Lipsett-Rivera, 1998), it has great variability in relation to honour, being influenced by the vast social, cultural and identity differences of the national territory (Araújo, 2016).

The association of the Northeast with the culture of honour, in addition to specific data, may be linked to perceptions and representations of the region, whose historical constitution is violent, developing codes of justice parallel to the state (“cangaço”), as well as a system of values based on patriarchy and reputation (Albuquerque Junior, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

This article analysed the relationship between male identity and sexism, considering the concepts of masculinity and the culture of honour as possible mediating elements of this relationship. Although the culture of honour did not prove to be a significant mediating element in this model, our results illustrate how identity assumptions, related to hegemonic masculinity, can operate as triggers of negative attitudes and violence against women. This pattern of results confirms our theoretical assumptions that hegemonic masculinity is associated with sexist attitudes and behaviours towards women (Giordano et al., 2006; Glick et al., 2015; Wade & Brittan-Powell, 2001; Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Bringing to light the idea that male identity, based on hegemonic precepts of gender, works to reaffirm male superiority to the detriment of female superiority, it naturalizes practices of sexism and violent behaviour in defence of the maintenance of male identity, also indicating a movement to maintain traditional gender postures, which demarcate social differences and ensure spaces of male power, opening possibilities for the naturalization of the use of violence to maintain this masculinity.

In this sense, it was possible to perceive that the process of social differentiation, which helps to maintain a positive masculine identity, to the detriment of traits attributed to the out-group (women), reinforces the social division based on gender and justifies the actions directed at these stereotyped groups (Tajfel, 1983). It was also possible to verify that valuing the in-group (male identity) only implied devaluation of the out-group (sexism), when galvanized by traditionalist conceptions of masculinity, indicating that love for one's own group does not directly imply hatred for the other's group. (Brewer, 1999).

We also found a positive association between male identity and a rural identity in relation to sexism. These identities were strongly related, in many aspects, overlapping and also converging with the historical construction of this regional identity. In this way, while the participants shared and identified with representations and stereotypes that are directed to the rural identity, with overlap between identities,

patriarchal and gender-based exclusion characteristics that are present in the constitution of both identity representations were highlighted.

It is worth mentioning that the culture of honour, although it had no direct effect on sexism, was in both studies strongly correlated with conceptions of hegemonic masculinity and negatively associated with the male identity assumed by university students, who did not explicitly accept the honour culture of sexist physical violence, but continued to accept traditional conceptions of masculinity linked to it.

The present study has some limitations. The first is related to the measurement of the culture of honour. Despite the premise that in cultures where honour is a central theme of organization, masculinity and honour are closely linked, we did not find the mediating factor of this construct.

In future research, it would be interesting to review the self-report methodology, as well as to promote a broader perception of honour, examining its importance in the community and family spheres rather than being restricted to amorous relationships, as a way of accessing socially shared ideological and cultural content, demonstrating the relationship between honour and maintenance of masculinity in the Brazilian context.

Second, the research started from the perspective of male university students. It is possible that the relationships between the variables measured in this study would have differed significantly if the sample had consisted of individuals of both sexes and different age and educational groups. Thus, it would be important in the future to develop research that integrates the perspective of women and men of different ages, regions and educational levels as a way to broaden the understanding of regional identity and its intersections between genders. However, despite the limitations highlighted, we believe that this study opens new possibilities for understanding social phenomena, related to gender prejudice, from the study of identities.

We propose a reflection on dimensions of masculinity that are based on the maintenance of the patriarchal social structure, reproducing gender stereotypes, and promoting

discrimination and social violence insofar as they endorse sexist beliefs. Nevertheless, this study opens the possibility of denaturalizing the figures and gender roles, allowing us to think about other possible ways of being a man in the Sertão, beyond the stereotype of “male goat”, thus highlighting not

only the relevance of the discussion about masculinity, but the importance of understanding how this gender identity is immersed in premises that endorse prejudiced practices, as well as helping to fill the gap that still exists in Brazilian empirical studies.

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