

Hitting below the belt: Masculine honor beliefs and perceptions of unfair fighting behavior

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We examined the effect of masculine honor beliefs on perceptions of unfair fighting behavior. We proposed competing hypotheses about the nature of this relationship. Our Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis predicted masculine honor beliefs would be positively related to perceptions of unfair fighting behavior as permissible because they increase the likelihood of success. Conversely, our Reputation by Honorable Means Hypothesis predicted masculine honor beliefs would be negatively related to perceptions of unfair fighting behavior as permissible due to the importance of demonstrating masculinity through socially acceptable means (e.g., hitting above the belt). Across three studies, our results were generally consistent with the Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis. Individuals higher in masculine honor beliefs reporting greater perceptions of the fighting behavior as permissible, indicating they believe it is important, when involved in a physical fight, to win and to do so by any means necessary.

KEYWORDS

individual differences, masculine honor beliefs, perceptions of fighting, threats to masculinity

1 | INTRODUCTION

In an episode of the animated television series *King of the Hill*, the protagonist's (i.e., Hank Hill) son, Bobby Hill is bullied and forced to eat dirt by neighborhood boys. His father, Hank, then decides Bobby should learn to fight and instructs Bobby to take a boxing class at the local YMCA. However, the boxing classes at the YMCA are full, and Bobby enrolls in a women's self-defense class. In the self-defense class, Bobby learns to shout (i.e., "*That's my purse! I don't know you!*") and kick men in the groin if threatened. Bobby proceeds to deal with his bullies in this way. His parents, not knowing *how* Bobby has learned to defend himself, are proud their son is no longer getting bullied. However, this pride quickly turns to shame when they are called to the principal's office and Bobby tells them, "*Then, with all my might, I kicked him as hard as I could in the testicles.*" Horrified to learn Bobby warded off bullies by kicking them in the groin, Hank then teaches Bobby how to win a fight by hitting *above the belt*. Thus, while he wanted his son to fight, and was proud of his son for developing a tough reputation, he wanted his son to earn this reputation through the *right* kind of fighting behavior (i.e.,

"above the belt" or "fair" fighting behavior). Contrary to Hank's horror, however, was Bobby's pride in learning to win fights and developing a reputation as someone *not to be messed with*.

Warding off potential threats is central to masculine honor ideology. Masculine honor ideology contends that men's aggression in response to threats or insults to their reputations is justifiable and necessary in response to provocation, especially provocation that threatens men's reputation, property, or family (e.g., Cohen, 1998; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Nisbett, 1993). While research has indicated that, when their masculinity or masculine reputation is challenged, men must fight (e.g., O'Dea, Castro Bueno, & Saucier, 2017) and are socially rewarded for winning the fight (e.g., O'Dea, Chalman, Castro Beuno, & Saucier, 2018); little research has examined the fighting behavior that are deemed acceptable. We developed two competing hypotheses about the relationships between masculine honor and fighting behavior. The first is that masculine honor beliefs (MHB) would be related to perceiving unfair fighting behavior as more unacceptable because they develop the wrong kind of reputation. The second hypothesis is that

MHB would be related to perceiving unfair fighting behavior as more acceptable because they may lead to greater likelihoods of men winning a fight. Seminal work on honor in the United States (Nisbett, 1993) drew on anthropological and historical literature (e.g., Brearley, 1934; Carter, 1950; Cash, 1941) to give context to data that indicated Southern men were more violent than Northern men only in specific situations. Specifically, Southern men responded aggressively to situations in which they were insulted and/or were defending their reputation, property, family (especially their sister(s) and daughter(s)) and/or romantic partner (i.e., wife or girlfriend) from threat. Compared to Northern states, men from Southern states had more violent and aggressive reactions to threats and insults on emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological levels (e.g., Brown, Osterman, & Barnes, 2009; Cohen, 1998, Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996; Nisbett, 1993; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). This is likely due to the precarious nature (i.e., constantly having to prove oneself) of men's reputations (e.g., Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008).

Sociological and psychological scholars have theorized that these regional differences were created from Southern men's roots in livelihoods (e.g., herding) that were particularly vulnerable to outside threat (e.g., poaching) and that had no other means of protection due to a lack of available law enforcement. Indeed, American historians describe that Southern men, particularly those that depended on herding and hunting, frequently participated in what was labeled "rough-and-tumble" or simply "gouging" fights in which the goal was to severely disfigure (e.g., gouge the eyes) the opponent (Gorn, 1985; Greenberg, 1990). As sources of livelihoods (e.g., more stable crop production) and subsequent norms changed, Southern men were less likely to engage in "gouging" style fights (e.g., Gorn, 1985), but as evidenced by the regional differences above (e.g., Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012; Brown et al., 2009; Cohen, 1998, Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996; Nisbett, 1993; Osterman & Brown, 2011; Vandello et al., 2008), the masculine honor ideology that arose from this culture remained. Southern men are socialized to internalize an ideology that dictates what is viewed as normative and appropriate male behavior in response to provocation or threat (e.g., Brown et al., 2009).

Noting that these ideologies could be socialized and adopted by those outside of traditional regional boundaries, researchers have now conceptualized masculine honor as an ideological variable (e.g., Masculine Honor Beliefs Scale (MHBS)) that can be measured at the individual level (e.g., Barnes et al., 2012; Saucier et al., 2016; Vandello, Cohen, Grandon, & Franiuk, 2009). Importantly, because the items on the MHBS are ideological rather than self-reports of individuals' own behavior, both men and women can report their endorsement of masculine honor beliefs. Indeed, past research indicates that women can both endorse (e.g., Barnes et al., 2012; Saucier et al., 2016) and perpetuate and/or reinforce (e.g., Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Wyatt-Brown, 1982) masculine honor beliefs in men. To comprehensively measure individuals' endorsement of the Southern culture of honor values, Saucier et al. (2016) created seven subscales (i.e., Masculine Courage, Pride in Manhood,

Socialization, Virtue, Protection, Provocation, and Community and Family Bonds). As such, greater overall endorsement of masculine honor beliefs are equated with men's and women's endorsement of men showing their masculinity through acting courageously, showing pride in being masculine, a dedication to socializing their children to protect and defend, admiring physical aggression, protecting female family members, perceiving insults directed at loved ones as a personal insult, and valuing family and community.

Research has found this ideology varies among individuals both within and beyond regions traditionally identified as cultures of honor (e.g., Leung & Cohen, 2011; Saucier, Miller, et al., 2018). Using individual difference measures of MHB (e.g., Honor Ideology in Manhood, Barnes et al., 2012; Masculine Honor Beliefs Scale), researchers showed higher levels of MHB are associated with aggressive responses to provocation and insults (O'Dea et al., 2017; O'Dea et al. in press; Saucier et al., 2016; Saucier, Till, Miller, O'Dea, & Andres, 2015), greater negative emotional responses to threats to honor (Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002; Saucier et al., 2016), aggressive responses to terrorist threats (Barnes et al., 2012), and greater support for war and torture (Saucier, Webster, et al., 2018). Higher levels of masculine honor have also been shown to be associated with greater drive for muscularity (Saucier, O'Dea, & Stratmoen, 2018), more negative emotions and aggressive responses to romantic rejection (Stratmoen, Greer, Martens, & Saucier, 2018), and negative perceptions of both rape and women who have been raped (Saucier, Strain, Hockett, & McManus, 2015). Notably, researchers have also examined perceptions of men who chose to respond and men who chose *not* to respond physically to an insult (O'Dea et al., 2017, 2018). Higher levels of MHB were positively associated with enhanced perceptions (e.g., as stronger, powerful, brave, and honorable) of a man who chose to respond physically, and diminished perceptions (e.g., as weaker, embarrassing, and wimpy) of a man who chose not to respond physically after an insult. Further, higher levels of MHB were associated with enhanced perceptions of a man who won the fight and diminished perceptions of a man who lost the fight (O'Dea et al., 2018), indicating that men are expected to physically aggress against a potential threat and, in doing so, are expected to win the fight.

2 | STUDIES OVERVIEW

We developed competing hypotheses about the relationships between MHB (Saucier et al., 2016) and unfair fighting behavior. On one hand, a man's reputation may suffer from engaging in "unfair" fighting behavior and men may be expected to win fights through honorable means. Thus, MHB may be negatively correlated with the perceptions that men may use behavior that individuals deem unfair or unacceptable. We labeled this hypothesis the Reputation by Honorable Means Hypothesis. Conversely, individuals who are higher in endorsement of masculine honor beliefs generally hold greater beliefs that men should engage in behavior that build tough reputations (i.e., makes them appear to be a *hard target*; see Saucier, O'Dea, et al., 2018).

Consistent with historical accounts (see Gorn, 1985; Greenberg, 1990) and Saucier, Webster, et al.'s (2018) finding that MHB are related to greater support for war and torture, men may use "unfair" fighting tactics because they increase the likelihood that men will win a physical fight. Therefore, the second hypothesis was that MHB would be positively related to perceptions that unfair fighting behavior are permissible. We labeled this hypothesis the Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis. To test our competing hypotheses, we first identified "unfair" fighting behavior as behavior that participants in a pilot study perceived should not be enacted during a physical fight. Because both men and women can endorse (e.g., Saucier et al., 2016) and perpetuate (e.g., Nisbett & Cohen, 1996) masculine honor beliefs, we used both men and women as our participants in each of the following studies. Through our pilot study, we identified a taxonomy of categories of unfair fighting behavior (e.g., the use of weapons) we then used in three subsequent studies to test the relationship between MHB and perceptions of behavior as acceptable in a fight. In each of our three studies we examined whether MHBS interacted with condition in predicting how acceptable participants perceived each of the behavior in the fighting taxonomy in situations in which they were defending themselves (Studies 1 and 3) or their significant other from insult (Study 2). These three studies uniquely contribute to the understanding of how masculine honor ideology relates to individuals' perceptions of permissible behavior in a physical fight.

3 | STUDY 1 METHOD

3.1 | Participants

Participants ($N = 172$; $M_{age} = 18.86$, $SD = 1.31$) were recruited via the SONA systems online software from a Midwestern university. This sample exceeded the necessary sample size for medium effects with .80 power. Participants received credit toward a research requirement for their introductory psychology course. Of the participants, 58.1% self-identified as female and 40.1% self-identified as male. Sex was again tested as a moderator, but generally did not interact with either MHBS or condition in predicting participants' endorsement of unfair fighting behavior. These analyses are available upon request. 84.3% of participants identified as White, 4.7% identified as Black, 5.2% identified as Hispanic, 1.7% identified as Asian, 1.2% identified as Native American, and 1.2% identified as "other". Three participants declined to provide their race and were retained for all analyses for which they had complete data.

3.2 | Vignette

Participants were presented with a similar vignette to that used by O'Dea et al. (2018) in which a male protagonist, Danny, is walking down a busy sidewalk. A male antagonist then bumped into Danny. The vignette was manipulated such that the antagonist either apologized or insulted the protagonist. Both scenarios ended with the protagonist punching the antagonist and the two men getting into a fight. The complete vignette with the apology condition is shown below (the bracketed portions denote the alternative insult condition).

Danny is walking down the sidewalk of a busy street when a man bumps into his shoulder. The stranger turns to Danny and says "my bad" [mutter "fucking pussy"]. Danny reacts by punching the man in the face. The two men then fight.

3.3 | Pilot study

To identify categories of unfair fighting behavior, we conducted a brief pilot study in which we asked 104 participants, "What are some things that you think are not fair or should not be done during a physical fight?" This pilot study led to the creation of the following measures. The complete results are available upon request from the corresponding author. We also conducted a principal components factor analysis using the data from an additional pilot study which resulted in items loading onto their predicted factors. This is available upon request.

3.4 | Measures

For each behavior shown below participants responded using a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale. For each of these categories a composite score was generated by averaging the participants' responses to all items with higher scores representing greater perceptions that these fighting behaviors are fair in a physical fight. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations between each of our categories are presented in Table 1.

3.4.1 | Cheap shots

Cheap shots consisted of behavior identified that did not require additional individuals, additional equipment, and could inflict pain on the target with minimal effort. This category included five types of behavior (e.g., "It would have been okay for Danny to hit the man in the groin during the fight").

3.4.2 | Use of weapons

Weapons consisted of individuals using additional equipment to harm someone in a fight. This category included five types of behavior (e.g., "It would have been okay for Danny to use a gun during the fight").

3.4.3 | Fair numbers

Fair numbers consisted of individuals getting help from others such as having a friend help or having a group of friends help in the fight, ganging up on the opposing individual. This category included four types of behavior (e.g., "It would have been okay for Danny to have the help of a friend during the fight").

3.4.4 | Size and ability

The size and ability category consisted of individuals intentionally engaging in a physical fight knowing they are bigger, older, or have

more fighting experience. This category included three types of behavior (e.g., "It would have only been okay for Danny to fight the man if they are around the same weight"). These items were reverse scored to be parallel to the other categories such that higher scores in this category represented perceptions of these behavior as unfair.

3.4.5 | Severity

The severity category consisted of behavior which may seriously injure the opposing individual. This category included five types of behavior (e.g., "It would have been okay for Danny to beat the man until he is unconscious").

3.4.6 | General fighting rules

Five items were added to the unfair fighting taxonomy to measure overarching attitudes toward unfair fighting behavior, and the extent to which participants perceive rules that need to be adhered to during a physical altercation. An example item includes, "I think that during this fight, anything is okay for Danny to do"

3.4.7 | Masculine honor beliefs

We measured participants' endorsement of MHB using the Masculine Honor Belief Scale (MHBS; Saucier et al., 2016) which has been shown to be both internally consistent and reliable, while demonstrating convergent and discriminant validity. The scale contains seven subscales that were created to incorporate the factors previously associated with the culture of honor as it exists in the American South (see Saucier et al., 2016; see also Cohen, 1998; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996; Nisbett, 1993). The seven factors are masculine courage (e.g., *A man should not be afraid to fight*), pride in manhood (*It is important for a man to be more masculine than other men*); socialization (*You would want your son to stand up to bullies*); virtue (*Physical violence is the most honorable way to defend yourself*); protection (*A man should protect his wife*); provocation/insult (*If a man's wife is insulted, his manhood is insulted*), and family and community bonds (It is important to spend time with the members of your family). Each subscale contains five items and they all combine to create an internally consistent overall measure of Masculine Honor Beliefs. The 35-item MHBS was measured on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale.

3.5 | Procedure

Participants were recruited via the SONA systems software from a Midwestern research university. After providing informed consent, participants read the randomly assigned vignette described above. Participants then completed the items measuring unfair fighting behavior, the MHBS, and a demographics survey (e.g., age, race, sex). It is important to note here, that temporal precedence was violated in terms of the order of materials presented to participants. This was a conscious decision which was made based on theoretical precedent

(see O'Dea et al., 2017, 2018). Specifically, the MHBS has been shown to be highly stable across time (see Saucier et al., 2016) but is also highly face valid. Participants are likely to realize what we are measuring as they answer the items. As such, completing this prior to reporting perceptions on the vignette is likely to bias responding to the vignette. Thus, we chose to always measure the MHBS after participants read the vignette and reported their perceptions of the protagonist. Participants were then debriefed, given credit toward their course research requirement, and thanked for their participation.

4 | RESULTS

Consistent with the Reputation by Honorable Means Hypothesis, we predicted that MHB would be negatively related to endorsement of unfair fighting behavior after a man is insulted *and* if he is apologized to. However, consistent with the Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis, we predicted that, when insulted, MHBS would be positively related to endorsement of unfair fighting tactics. Indeed, due to MHBS being associated with more negative perceptions of a man who fights against another man who apologizes to him after bumping his shoulder (see O'Dea et al., 2018), we predicted that MHBS would be negatively correlated with unfair fighting behavior when the man fights against another man who apologizes to him. Descriptive statistics for and correlations between MHBS (and its subscales) and participants' perceptions of each of the fighting behavior as fair are presented in Table 1. We conducted a series of hierarchical regressions in which MHBS and condition were entered into the first step and their interaction term was entered into the second step with separate regressions conducted for each unfair fighting measure (see Table 2). For each of the hierarchical regressions (except participants' endorsement of weapons and general rules in the fight), there was a significant main effect of MHBS predicting participants' perceptions of the unfair fighting behavior as permissible. Specifically, MHBS was positively associated with greater endorsement of cheap shots, unfair numbers, and severity. MHBS was associated with lower endorsement of fighting someone who was of a different size or ability. There is no theoretical precedent for this finding and it is possible this is an artifact. This will be discussed more in Study 2 and addressed more fully in Study 3.

Across each of the other categories of fighting behavior, the results indicate that once a man has chosen to fight, participants higher in MHBS endorsed the use of more unfair fighting behavior than participants lower in MHBS regardless of whether the antagonist apologized or insulted the protagonist. This is also generally consistent for each of the MHBS subscales, except in the case of family and community bonds (refer to Table 1) for which the relationships generally were non-significant. This indicates that greater levels of masculine honor beliefs are associated with greater endorsement of unfair fighting behavior, but these effects are largely driven by the subscales of masculine honor beliefs more rooted in men making themselves appear to be *hard targets* (see Saucier, O'Dea, et al., 2018) to others. That said, the less aggressive facets of honor were not generally negatively correlated with unfair fighting behavior, indicating

TABLE 1 MHBS subscales and correlations with unfair fighting behavior

Measure	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1. MHBS	5.46	1.35	(0.95)													
2. MC	5.54	1.92	0.90*	(0.90)												
3. Provocation	4.07	2.28	0.78*	0.61*	(0.94)											
4. FCB	7.97	1.21	0.47*	0.36*	0.10	(0.81)										
5. PM	4.23	1.79	0.91*	0.81*	0.76*	0.24*	(0.84)									
6. Protection	7.13	1.70	0.80*	0.72*	0.41*	0.63*	0.61*	(0.90)								
7. Virtue	2.66	1.67	0.70*	0.57*	0.67*	-0.02	0.71*	0.28*	(0.89)							
8. Socialization	6.64	1.55	0.79*	0.71*	0.38*	0.52*	0.61*	0.77*	0.37*	(0.81)						
9. Cheap Shots	2.13	1.76	0.28*	0.25*	0.17*	0.08	0.25*	0.22*	0.24*	0.28*	(0.94)					
10. Weapons	1.39	1.14	0.13	0.12	0.20*	-0.23*	0.20*	-0.03	0.30*	0.03	0.38*	(0.97)				
11. UN	2.34	1.75	0.19*	0.17*	0.19*	-0.03	0.19*	0.15	0.18*	0.13	0.49*	0.61*	(0.89)			
12. DSA	7.65	1.88	-0.37*	-0.31*	-0.36*	-0.02	-0.37*	-0.23*	-0.30*	-0.29*	-0.53*	-0.41*	-0.55*	(0.96)		
13. Severity	2.13	1.78	0.40*	0.38*	0.35*	0.03	0.40*	0.25*	0.35*	0.31*	0.69*	0.57*	0.59*	-0.70*	(0.93)	
14. Rules	2.35	1.34	0.13	0.13	0.21*	-0.30*	0.15	-0.04	0.35*	0.02	0.34*	0.48*	0.26*	-0.28*	0.36*	(0.55)

Cronbach's Alpha is presented in parentheses on the diagonal. FCB, family and community bonds; PM, pride in Manhood; UN, unfair numbers; DSA, different size/ability. * $p < 0.05$.

TABLE 2 Regression analyses for MHBS, condition, and their interactions predicting unfair fighting behavior categories in Study 1

Step	Variable	R ²	Δ R ²	Sig Δ R ²	B	β	t	p
Cheap shots								
Step 1		0.18	0.18	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				0.43	0.25	3.47	0.001
	Condition				-1.15	-0.33	-4.62	<0.001
Step 2		0.19	<0.01	0.564				
	ZMHBS*Condition				-0.15	-0.06	-0.58	0.564
Use of weapons								
Step 1		0.03	0.03	0.084				
	ZMHBS				0.14	0.12	1.56	0.121
	Condition				-0.25	-0.11	-1.43	.155
Step 2		0.03	<0.01	0.469				
	ZMHBS*Condition				0.13	0.08	0.73	0.469
Fair numbers								
Step 1		0.15	0.15	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				0.27	0.16	2.15	0.033
	Condition				-1.16	-0.33	-4.60	<0.001
Step 2		0.15	<0.01	0.759				
	ZMHBS*Condition				-0.08	-0.03	-0.31	0.759
Different size/ability								
Step 1		0.22	0.22	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				-0.63	-0.33	-4.85	<0.001
	Condition				1.11	0.30	4.27	<0.001
Step 2		0.23	0.01	0.217				
	ZMHBS*Condition				0.32	0.12	1.24	0.217
Severity								
Step 1		0.24	0.24	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				0.65	0.37	5.39	<0.001
	Condition				-1.02	-0.29	-4.20	<0.001
Step 2		0.25	0.01	0.078				
	ZMHBS*Condition				-0.43	-0.16	-1.78	0.078
No rules								
Step 1		0.03	0.03	0.060				
	ZMHBS				0.15	0.11	1.46	0.146
	Condition				-0.35	-0.13	-1.72	0.088
Step 2		0.05	0.02	0.096				
	ZMHBS*Condition				0.34	0.17	1.68	0.096

Condition was coded as 0 = insult and 1 = apology. MHBS was standardized prior to entry in each of the hierarchical regressions.

general support for our reputation by any means hypothesis over our reputation by honorable means hypothesis. There was also a main effect of condition such that when the other man insulted the protagonist, participants endorsed cheap shots, unfair numbers, and severity more and endorsed different size and ability less than when the other man apologized to the protagonist. These findings show that situational factors affect the extent to which individuals generally

perceive certain fighting behavior as fair. However, higher levels of MHBS are associated with greater perceptions of these fighting behavior as fair regardless of condition.

Contrary to our hypotheses, there were no significant two-way interactions predicting participants' endorsement of any of the unfair fighting behavior. Consistent with the Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis, we predicted MHBS would interact with condition such

that higher levels of MHBS would be associated with greater perceptions of the fighting behavior as unfair when the antagonist insulted the protagonist's masculinity, but not when the antagonist apologized to the protagonist (i.e., consistent with Reputation by Honorable Means Hypothesis). Specifically, we predicted this because it is consistent with previous research (e.g., O'Dea et al., 2018; Nisbett, 1993) that indicates that men are not expected to be more violent generally, such as when there is no threat present. Conversely, consistent with O'Dea et al. (2018), men are expected to win fights as a function of masculine honor (i.e., consistent with Reputations by Any Means Hypothesis). However, previous research does not provide an explanation for why MHBS is positively related to the unfair fighting behavior *independently* of whether the man apologized or insulted the protagonist. One explanation is that while men are not expected to be violent generally (e.g., Nisbett, 1993), and may even be perceived negatively for acting violently when there is no threat and/or insult, once they have chosen to engage in violence, men must win the fight, and must win by any means necessary. This explanation is consistent with research that indicates failing to be victorious could tarnish one's manhood, something that is precarious by nature (e.g., Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009; Brown, 2016; Nisbett, 1993; Saucier & McManus, 2014; Vandello et al., 2008). The use of these fighting tactics (e.g., cheap shots) may create a greater likelihood for an individual to win a fight. Admittedly, this explanation is based on the results of one study. Therefore, we conducted additional studies to replicate and extend these findings by examining participants' perceptions of the fighting behavior as unfair toward an antagonist who either insulted or apologized to the protagonist's significant other. This change was selected as a way to provide a conceptual replication of Study 1, but also an extension to another facet of masculinity that is theoretically important to protect, which is one's significant other.

5 | STUDY 2 METHOD

5.1 | Participants

Participants ($N = 163$; $M_{\text{age}} = 19.00$, $SD = 1.65$) were recruited via the SONA systems software from a Midwestern university. This sample exceeded the necessary sample size for medium effects with 0.80 power. Participants received credit toward a research requirement for an introductory psychology course. Of the 163 participants, 65.2% self-identified as female and 34.1% self-identified as male. Again, sex did not interact with MHBS or condition in predicting participants' scores on our criterion variables and analyses are available upon request. One participant declined to answer this demographic item. 84.8% identified as White, 4.3% identified as Black, 4.9% identified as Hispanic, 1.2% identified as Asian, 0.6% identified as Native American, and 3.7% identified as "other." One participant declined to provide his/her race.

5.2 | Vignettes

Study 2 used a vignette similar to the vignette used in Study 1 depicting a scenario of a male protagonist, Danny, walking down a

busy sidewalk alongside his girlfriend. The girlfriend was subsequently bumped into by second man who is passing by. The man then apologized to or insulted Danny's significant other. Danny then turned to the man and punched him in the face, confronting the man. The complete vignette, as was shown in the apology condition, is provided below (the bracketed portion denote the alternative insult conditions).

Danny is walking with his girlfriend down the sidewalk of a busy street when a man bumps into his girlfriend. The stranger turns to Danny's girlfriend and says "my bad" [mutters "fucking bitch"]. Danny reacts by punching the man in the face.

5.3 | Measures

Following presentation of the randomly assigned vignette, participants completed the same measures used in Study 1. This included the MHBS and the six categories of unfair fighting behavior (i.e., cheap shots, weapons, fair numbers size and ability, severity, and general rules). Participants responded to all items on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*) scale.

5.4 | Procedure

Participants were recruited via SONA systems software from a Midwestern research university. After providing informed consent, participants read the randomly assigned vignette. Participants then completed the items measuring their perceptions of the unfair fighting behavior and the MHBS. They then completed a demographics survey (e.g., age, race, sex), were debriefed, given credit toward their course research requirement, and thanked.

6 | RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between MHBS and participants' perceptions of each of the fighting behavior as fair are presented in Table 3. To test our competing hypotheses, we conducted a series of hierarchical regressions to replicate and extend the results of Study 1. Specifically, MHBS and condition were entered into the first step and their interaction term was entered into the second step with separate hierarchical regressions for each unfair fighting measure. The results of these regressions are presented in Table 4. For each of the hierarchical regressions (except for participants' perceptions that there should be no rules in the fight), there was a significant main effect of MHBS predicting participants' perceptions of the unfair fighting behavior as permissible. Specifically, MHBS was positively associated with greater endorsement of cheap shots, weapons, unfair numbers, and severity. On the contrary, MHBS was associated with lower endorsement of fighting someone who was of a different size or ability. Again, there is no theoretical precedent for this finding. In hindsight, the way the item was worded could have impacted participants'

TABLE 3 MHBS subscales and correlations with unfair fighting behavior in Study 2

Measure	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1. MHBS	5.26	1.51	(0.96)													
2. MC	5.28	2.04	0.90*	(0.92)												
3. Provocation	3.96	2.34	0.81*	0.69*	(0.95)											
4. FCB	7.51	1.73	0.55*	0.44*	0.15	(0.90)										
5. PM	4.11	1.97	0.89*	0.81*	0.79*	0.25*	(0.87)									
6. Protection	6.61	2.00	0.83*	0.76*	0.48*	0.76*	0.59*	(0.92)								
7. Virtue	2.87	1.80	0.64*	0.50*	0.72*	-0.12	0.72*	0.23*	(0.89)							
8. Socialization	6.46	1.64	0.81*	0.68*	0.49*	0.62*	0.60*	0.76*	0.34*	(0.82)						
9. Cheap Shots	2.21	1.82	0.20*	0.20*	0.20*	-0.05	0.26*	0.07	0.25*	0.13	(0.93)					
10. Weapons	1.46	1.22	0.16*	0.17*	0.29*	-0.27*	0.26*	-0.08	0.46*	0.01	0.52*	(0.96)				
11. UN	2.61	1.87	0.28*	0.27*	0.29*	0.03	0.31*	0.13	0.27*	0.22*	0.53*	0.56*	(0.88)			
12. DSA	7.20	2.22	-0.31*	-0.28*	-0.33*	0.03	-0.34*	-0.14	-0.38*	-0.22*	-0.43*	-0.44*	-0.49*	(0.96)		
13. Severity	2.36	1.85	0.46*	0.46*	0.45*	0.03	0.50*	0.22*	0.47*	0.31*	0.66*	0.59*	0.64*	-0.51*	(0.92)	
14. Rules	2.59	1.59	0.04	0.05	0.21*	-0.42*	0.17*	-0.22*	0.43*	-0.11	0.33*	0.57*	0.17*	-0.15	0.32*	(0.67)

Cronbach's Alpha is presented in parentheses on the diagonal. FCB, family and community bonds; PM, pride in Manhood; UN, unfair numbers; DSA, different size/ability. * $p < 0.05$.

TABLE 4 Regression analyses for MHBS, condition, and their interactions predicting unfair fighting behavior categories in Study 2

Step	Variable	R ²	Δ R ²	Sig Δ R ²	B	β	t	p
Cheap shots								
Step 1		0.11	0.11	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				0.33	0.18	2.43	0.016
	Condition				-0.94	-0.56	-3.44	0.001
Step 2		0.11	<0.01	0.509				
	ZMHBS*Condition				0.18	0.07	0.66	0.509
Use of weapons								
Step 1		0.03	0.03	0.090				
	ZMHBS				0.20	0.16	2.04	0.043
	Condition				-0.13	-0.06	-0.70	0.483
Step 2		0.04	0.01	0.272				
	ZMHBS*Condition				-0.21	-0.13	-1.10	0.272
Fair numbers								
Step 1		0.16	0.16	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				0.50	0.27	3.66	<0.001
	Condition				-1.08	-0.29	-3.99	<0.001
Step 2		0.18	0.01	0.133				
	ZMHBS*Condition				-0.41	-0.16	-1.51	0.133
Different size/ability								
Step 1		0.13	0.13	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				-0.67	-0.30	-4.05	<0.001
	Condition				0.81	0.18	2.46	0.015
Step 2		0.15	0.02	0.071				
	ZMHBS*Condition				0.60	0.20	1.82	0.071
Severity								
Step 1		0.25	0.25	<0.001				
	ZMHBS				0.82	0.44	6.44	<0.001
	Condition				-0.80	-0.22	-3.16	0.002
Step 2		0.30	0.04	0.003				
	ZMHBS*Condition				-0.76	-0.30	-3.05	0.003
No rules								
Step 1		<0.01	<0.01	0.901				
	ZMHBS				0.05	0.03	0.43	0.668
	Condition				-0.03	-0.01	-0.13	0.898
Step 2		0.1	0.01	0.262				
	ZMHBS*Condition				-0.28	-0.13	-1.13	0.262

Condition was coded as 0 = insult and 1 = apology. MHBS was standardized prior to entry in each of the hierarchical regressions.

perceptions of how permissible they perceived the behavior to be. An example item from this category read, "It would have only been okay for Danny to fight the man if they are around the same weight." Unfortunately, we did not specify whether the opponent was bigger or smaller than the protagonist (smaller being the more unfair fight favoring the protagonist). This is a limitation that impacts the interpretation of these items and these findings should be interpreted with caution, but this will be addressed in Study 3. Aside from this

category, the results of Study 2 provided an excellent replication of the findings of Study 1. When we again examined the relationships between the MHBS subscales and perceptions of unfair fighting behavior, these results generally replicated our findings in Study 1. Specifically, across each of the subscales, higher scores were related to significantly greater endorsement of unfair fighting behavior except for family and community bonds and protection (Table 3) for which the relationships generally were non-significant or weakly correlated.

Thus, consistent with Study 1, the relationships between masculine honor beliefs and endorsement of unfair fighting behavior are largely driven by the subscales of masculine honor beliefs more rooted in men making themselves appear like *hard targets* (see Saucier, O'Dea, et al., 2018) to others. Similar to Study 1, there was also a main effect of condition such that when the other man insulted the protagonist's significant other, participants endorsed cheap shots, unfair numbers, and severity more, and endorsed different size and ability less, than when the other man apologized to the protagonist's significant other.

There was only a significant two-way interaction between MHBS and condition on the dependent measure of severity. Interestingly, when we probed this interaction, MHBS was positively related to severity when the other man insulted the protagonist's significant other ($\beta = 0.66$; $p < 0.001$) and when the other man apologized to the protagonist's significant other ($\beta = 0.25$; $p = 0.007$). Thus, while MHBS was associated with more severe beating of the man who insulted the protagonist's significant other, consistent with Study 1, MHBS was also associated with greater severity when the other man apologized, but at a lower level than when the other man insulted the protagonist's significant other, suggesting that bumping a man's significant other may be perceived as a threat that justifies severe aggressive responding even if an apology is offered. Taken together, these results again support the Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis. Previous research has shown men are not expected to behave violently in general. However, men who are engaged in a physical fight should win the fight to avoid appearing weak (O'Dea et al., 2018). The behavior identified in our studies may increase the likelihood that the man wins the fight even if the means they use are generally deemed as "unfair."

We have shown that individuals higher in MHB perceive these behaviors as generally more permissible than do individuals lower in MHB which is theoretically founded in our Reputation by any Means Hypothesis that men should avoid appearing weak. That said, these findings could be due to people not understanding the apology as we intended it to be understood. "My bad" is an apology frequent in younger generations admitting fault in a situation. However, it is possible that participants may have perceived this as a half-hearted apology, or even as sarcastic and insulting. Therefore, we conducted a replication of our current findings along with a check of whether participants did perceive the apology condition as more apologetic than the insult condition. Further, even though masculine honor beliefs have not interacted with participant sex in meaningful ways to this point, it would be interesting to examine whether these perceptions of unfair fighting behavior extend to women or if these are limited to men. There are competing hypotheses about the relationships between MHBS and perceptions of the acceptability of women engaging in violence based on existing literature in cultures of honor. Specifically, while women are involved in the socialization process of young boys and men, in previous theory on honor, men are expected to be the protector in a relationship. Therefore, MHBS may not be correlated (or may be negatively correlated) with perceptions that women should respond to threats using aggressive unfair fighting behavior. On the other hand, recent research in our lab has shown that, while men are

generally deemed the protectors in masculine honor ideologies, women are actually viewed preferentially as a function of masculine honor beliefs for behaving aggressively in response to threat. Conversely to the relationships shown with men, women are not viewed negatively for not confronting threats (Chalman, O'Dea, & Saucier, 2018). Thus, Chalman et al.'s (2018) findings would suggest that, if a woman has chosen to engage in a fight, she may also engage in behavior that are deemed unfair to win the fight by any means necessary. If this is the case, MHBS should also be positively correlated with endorsement of unfair fighting behavior for the protagonist even if the protagonist is a woman.

7 | STUDY 3 METHODS

7.1 | Participants

Participants were recruited via Amazon's TurkPrime software (Litman, Robinson, & Abberbock, 2016). There were 308 participants which exceeded the necessary sample size for medium effects for linear multiple regression with seven predictors (three main effects, three 2-way interactions, one 3-way interaction), and 0.80 power. Of the 308 participants, there were 103 men, 204 women, and 1 participant who self-identified as "other." There were 225 White participants, 32 African American participants, 18 Hispanic participants, 18 Asian participants, 6 Native American participants, and 9 participants who self-identified their race as "other." The average age of participants was 37.37 (SD = 13.69).

7.2 | Vignette

Participants were presented with a vignette similar to that used in Study 1 in which we manipulated whether an antagonist insulted or apologized to the protagonist after bumping into them. However, we also manipulated whether the protagonist was a man (Danny) or a woman (Danielle). We also attempted to make the apology more clearly sincere in the apologetic condition. The full vignette is presented below as it was shown in the male protagonist, insult condition (the portions in brackets denote alternative conditions).

Danny [Danielle] is walking down the sidewalk of a busy street when a man bumps into his [her] shoulder. The stranger turns to Danny [Danielle] and mutters "fucking asshole" at him [says "I'm sorry, I didn't see you there"]. Danny [Danielle] reacts by punching the man in the face. They then fight.

7.3 | Measures

Participants completed the same measures used in Studies 1 and 2 including the MHBS and the six categories of unfair fighting behavior using a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*) scale. To address the limitation of Studies 2 and 3 on the different size/ability items that it

was not clear whether the items were referring to someone larger or smaller than the protagonist, we re-wrote these items to be clearer that this was about someone substantially smaller (*It would have been okay for the person bumped to fight the stranger if the stranger was substantially smaller than the person bumped is.*), younger (*It would have been okay for the person bumped to fight the stranger if the stranger was substantially younger than the person bumped is.*), or worse at fighting (*It would have been okay for the person bumped to fight the stranger if the stranger was obviously worse at fighting than the person bumped is*) than the protagonist.

7.4 | Procedure

After providing informed consent, participants read the randomly assigned vignette. They then completed the measures assessing their perceptions of each of the categories of unfair fighting behavior as acceptable, completed the MHBS, completed demographic information, and were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

8 | RESULTS

We first checked our manipulation of apology to ensure that participants did perceive the apologetic condition as substantially different from the insult condition. To do this we asked participants to rate how apologetic they perceived the antagonist to be on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*) scale. This manipulation was confirmed as participants perceived the insult condition ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 1.72$) to be significantly less apologetic than the apology condition ($M = 7.13$, $SD = 2.22$), $t(306) = -24.00$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 2.73$. We then tested whether MHBS interacted with protagonist sex and condition to predict participants' perceptions of the unfair fighting behavior as acceptable. Replicating Studies 1 and 2, we predicted that higher levels of MHBS would be related to significantly greater perceptions that the unfair fighting behavior were acceptable regardless of whether the antagonist apologized or insulted the protagonist. To be clear, consistent with O'Dea et al. (2018), individuals higher in MHBS *do not* want a protagonist to fight against someone who has apologized to him. However, once engaged in the fight, consistent with Studies 1 and 2, it appears that individuals higher in MHBS have a stronger desire that the protagonist win by any means necessary. The relationships between the MHBS subscales and perceptions of unfair fighting behavior generally replicated our findings in Studies 1 and 2 that higher scores on the subscales were related to significantly greater endorsement of unfair fighting behavior except for family and community bonds, protection, and socialization (Table 5). The relationships were non-significant for protection and socialization and MHBS was negatively correlated with family and community bonds. Taken together, these results are generally consistent with the reputation by any means hypothesis, but again these findings are driven by subscales of masculine honor beliefs more rooted in men making themselves appear as *hard targets* (see Saucier, O'Dea, et al., 2018) to others. There were competing hypotheses about whether

MHBS would interact with protagonist sex. On one hand, because men are generally perceived as the protectors in honor ideologies, MHBS may be negatively correlated or unrelated to perceptions of women engaging in unfair fighting behavior. On the other hand, Chalman et al. (2018) showed that higher levels of MHBS are related to greater perceptions of *both* men and women who respond aggressively to provocation. Therefore, higher levels of MHBS may be associated with significantly greater perceptions that individuals use unfair fighting behavior regardless of the sex of the individual fighting. Our results in Study 3 were consistent with this latter speculation and findings by Chalman et al. (2018). Specifically, as can be seen in Table 6, higher levels of MHBS were associated with significantly greater perceptions of all six (cheap shots, weapons, fair numbers, bigger/better size/ability, severity, and no rules) categories of unfair fighting behavior and MHBS did not interact with any other variables in predicting participants' perceptions of the unfair fighting as acceptable. This study provides support and validity to the findings of Studies 1 and 2. Specifically, while individuals higher in MHBS do not perceive that men should fight when there is no threat present (O'Dea et al., 2018), once individuals have engaged in violence, they should win by any means necessary to avoid having their reputation diminished further and appearing weak by losing the fight.

9 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

We tested competing hypotheses about the relationships between MHB and unfair fighting behavior. Specifically, we compiled a list of unfair fighting behavior which we categorized as cheap shots, weapons, fair numbers, unfair numbers, different size/ability, and severity. We then correlated MHB with the endorsement of each of these behavior. In Studies 1 and 2, we manipulated whether a protagonist was fighting against a male antagonist who had insulted or apologized after bumping into the protagonist (Study 2) or the protagonist's significant other (Study 3). The findings of these two studies were consistent with the Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis: higher levels of MHB were associated with greater perceptions of the fighting behavior as permissible. Importantly, these relationships were independent of whether the antagonist insulted or apologized to the protagonist and even independent of whether the protagonist was a man or woman, consistent with recent research by Chalman et al. (2018) that women are not perceived negatively as a function of masculine honor beliefs for behaving aggressively and using unfair fighting behavior (Study 3). At first glance, these findings may appear alarming – why would individuals endorse unfair fighting behavior against someone who apologized to the protagonist? Previous research using the same vignette as the current studies showed that higher levels of MHB were not associated with more endorsement of the protagonist violently engaging an antagonist who apologized to the protagonist (O'Dea et al., 2018). That said, in the current studies, we did not give participants a choice about whether the protagonist *should* fight or not. Instead, we told participants that the male and female protagonist aggressively engaged the antagonist. An explanation for

TABLE 5 MHBS subscales and correlations with unfair fighting behavior in Study 3

Measure	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1. MHBS	5.10	1.55	(0.96)													
2. MC	5.32	2.05	0.90*	(0.89)												
3. Provocation	3.62	2.41	0.79*	0.62*	(0.94)											
4. FCB	7.39	1.70	0.48*	0.41*	.08	(0.88)										
5. PM	4.14	1.92	0.88*	0.78*	0.76*	0.17*	(0.82)									
6. Protection	6.22	2.08	0.84*	0.79*	0.47*	0.61*	0.64*	(0.90)								
7. Virtue	2.81	1.97	0.67*	0.53*	0.74*	-0.14*	0.75*	0.28*	(0.91)							
8. Socialization	6.18	1.93	0.80*	0.68*	0.43*	0.59*	0.55*	0.77*	0.31*	(0.85)						
9. Cheap Shots	2.40	2.18	0.34*	0.24*	0.43*	-0.21*	0.47*	0.08	0.63*	0.13*	(0.96)					
10. Weapons	1.92	1.88	0.29*	0.20*	0.43*	-0.32*	0.45*	-0.01	0.69*	0.02	0.81*	(0.97)				
11. UN	2.62	2.28	0.32*	0.26*	0.36*	-0.16*	0.44*	0.12*	0.53*	0.13*	0.78*	0.74*	(0.94)			
12. BSA	2.33	2.18	0.34*	0.22*	0.42*	-0.17*	0.47*	0.09	0.60*	0.13*	0.87*	0.78*	0.80*	(0.95)		
13. Severity	2.32	2.13	0.33*	0.23*	0.42*	-0.21*	0.45*	0.07	0.64*	0.10	0.86*	0.81*	0.78*	0.86*	(0.96)	
14. Rules	2.96	1.65	0.21*	0.15*	0.36*	-0.37*	0.39*	-0.01	0.56*	-0.03	0.50*	0.59*	0.44*	0.56*	0.54*	(0.61)

Cronbach's Alpha is presented in parentheses on the diagonal. FCB, family and community bonds; PM, pride in Manhood; UN, unfair numbers; DSA, better size/ability. * $p < 0.05$.

TABLE 6 Regression analyses for MHBS, protagonist sex, condition, and their interactions predicting unfair fighting behavior categories in Study 3

Variable	B	se	T	p
Cheap shots: $\alpha = 0.96$; Model $R^2 = 0.13$, Model $F = 6.48$, Model $p < 0.001$				
Constant	2.40	0.12	20.48	<0.001
MHBS	0.50	0.08	6.34	<0.001
Protagonist sex	-0.07	0.23	-0.29	0.773
Condition	-0.43	0.23	-1.83	0.068
MHBS*Protagonist sex	-0.03	0.16	-0.22	0.826
MHBS*Condition	-0.03	0.16	-0.20	0.839
Protagonist sex*Condition	0.13	0.47	0.28	0.779
MHBS*Protagonist sex*Condition	-0.31	0.32	-0.97	0.332
Weapons: $\alpha = 0.97$; Model $R^2 = 0.10$, Model $F = 4.57$, Model $p < 0.001$				
Constant	1.92	0.10	18.67	<0.001
MHBS	0.37	0.07	5.31	<0.001
Protagonist sex	0.26	0.21	1.25	0.213
Condition	0.08	0.21	0.40	0.691
MHBS*Protagonist sex	0.10	0.14	0.69	0.489
MHBS*Condition	0.06	0.14	0.45	0.653
Protagonist sex*Condition	0.06	0.41	0.13	0.894
MHBS*Protagonist sex*Condition	-0.26	0.28	-0.95	0.341
Fair numbers: $\alpha = 0.94$; Model $R^2 = 0.13$, Model $F = 6.51$, Model $p < 0.001$				
Constant	2.62	0.12	21.40	<0.001
MHBS	0.50	0.08	6.09	<0.001
Protagonist sex	-0.04	0.24	-0.17	0.868
Condition	-0.55	0.24	-2.26	0.025
MHBS*Protagonist sex	0.16	0.16	0.95	0.341
MHBS*Condition	-0.02	0.16	-0.10	0.920
Protagonist sex*Condition	0.39	0.49	0.79	0.431
MHBS*Protagonist sex*Condition	-0.54	0.33	-1.64	0.102
Bigger/better size/ability: $\alpha = 0.95$; Model $R^2 = 0.13$, Model $F = 6.32$, Model $p < 0.001$				
Constant	2.32	0.12	19.82	<0.001
MHBS	0.50	0.08	6.31	<0.001
Protagonist sex	-0.04	0.23	-0.18	0.854
Condition	-0.38	0.23	-1.62	0.107
MHBS*Protagonist sex	-0.00	0.16	-0.03	0.977
MHBS*Condition	-0.06	0.16	-0.36	0.721
Protagonist sex*Condition	0.30	0.47	0.64	0.521
MHBS*Protagonist sex*Condition	-0.29	0.32	-0.92	0.356
Severity: $\alpha = 0.96$; Model $R^2 = 0.13$, Model $F = 6.20$, Model $p < 0.001$				
Constant	2.31	0.11	20.12	<0.001
MHBS	0.47	0.08	6.12	<0.001
Protagonist sex	-0.19	0.23	-0.81	0.421
Condition	-0.39	0.23	-1.68	0.094
MHBS*Protagonist sex	-0.07	0.15	-0.47	0.639
MHBS*Condition	-0.04	0.15	-0.25	0.805
Protagonist sex*Condition	0.44	0.46	0.95	0.344

(Continues)

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Variable	B	se	T	p
MHBS*Protagonist sex*Condition	-0.22	0.31	-0.72	0.470
No rules: $\alpha = 0.61$; Model $R^2 = 0.05$, Model $F = 2.48$, Model $p = 0.017$				
Constant	2.96	0.09	31.99	<0.001
MHBS	0.24	0.06	3.86	<0.001
Protagonist sex	-0.06	0.18	-0.33	0.741
Condition	0.16	0.18	0.86	0.391
MHBS*Protagonist sex	-0.10	0.12	-0.80	0.422
MHBS*Condition	0.04	0.12	0.29	0.772
Protagonist sex*Condition	0.36	0.37	0.97	0.335
MHBS*Protagonist sex*Condition	-0.11	0.25	-0.45	0.652

MHBS $\alpha = 0.96$; Protagonist sex was coded: male = 0, female = 1; Condition was coded: insults = 0, apology = 1. Analyses were conducted using Hayes (2017) process Model 3. Variables were centered before inclusion in interactions.

our findings could be that, even though he is not expected to fight when there is no threat or insult present, consistent with historical accounts (e.g., Gorn, 1985; Greenberg, 1990) and research (e.g., Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Nisbett, 1993; Saucier, O'Dea, et al., 2018) that support the Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis, once a man has engaged in physical violence, he should win the fight by any means necessary to avoid being further victimized (Bosson et al., 2009; Brown, 2016; Nisbett, 1993; Saucier & McManus, 2014; Vandello et al., 2008).

9.1 | Limitations

Like much of the existing literature (e.g., Barnes et al., 2012; O'Dea et al., 2017; Osterman & Brown, 2011; Saucier et al., 2016), our studies were conducted using self-report measures and vignettes. Future studies could use recorded videos of individuals engaging in these fighting behavior and measure perceptions of the individuals and behavior. An additional potential limitation is our use of both men and women in examining how *masculine* honor beliefs relate to perceptions of unfair fighting behavior. We did this for several reasons. The first is we examined *third party* perceptions of men who engage in physical violence. Masculine honor is a cultural variable and is not limited to men (e.g., Saucier et al., 2016). Both men and women can endorse or adhere to this type of ideology and both men and women are responsible for the socialization of MHB in young boys (e.g., teaching their sons to fight) and/or men (e.g., wanting or endorsing their significant others' aggressive behavior).

9.2 | Implications

Previous research has shown men are both expected to engage, and are socially rewarded for engaging, in violence in response to threat as a function of MHB. However, no research to our knowledge has examined the relationship between MHB and whether men are expected to adhere to certain rules when engaging in physical violence.

Stemming from the Southern culture of honor in the United States of America, men are expected to earn a reputation as a manly man to avoid being victimized. It appears that, while individuals higher in MHB only endorse violence in response to threats or insults, regardless of the reason for fighting, men may be expected to win the fight by any means necessary. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature suggesting that, rather than being conceptualized as an individual difference promoting instrumental violence to ensure honorable protection of family, self, and community; masculine honor may be better conceptualized as a pragmatic individual difference. Because masculine honor beliefs are largely centered on reputational concerns (Cohen, 1998; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996; Nisbett, 1993), it would be interesting to examine whether these effects may be attenuated if men are informed that these behavior are unacceptable prior to reading these vignettes. Future research should also examine the implications of this research for the sanctioning of antisocial behavior. Murders in response to threat and insult are committed, and seemingly endorsed more, by individuals in cultures of honor than those outside of cultures of honor (see Nisbett, 1993). Further, individuals higher in MHB are higher in their support for war and torture (e.g., Saucier, Webster, et al., 2018). While we do not propose a philosophical debate about the legitimacy of retaliatory action, war, and/or corporal punishment, the same question can be raised in each of these domains: how should the defender engage and when should the defender stop? Future research should examine the potential for principled arguments used as justification for apparently dishonorable behavior committed by individuals seeking to uphold their own masculine honor by way of community, self, and family protection.

10 | CONCLUSION

In summary, we examined the relationship between MHB and perceptions of unfair fighting behavior as permissible by both men and women. Previous research has shown that men are expected to

defend themselves against threat, but little research has examined which behavior are permissible in this defense, and perceptions of women who behave aggressively. We proposed two theoretically-distinct hypotheses to test the relationship between MHB and perceptions of the permissibility of unfair fighting behavior. Consistent with our Reputation by Any Means Hypothesis, across three studies we showed that higher levels of MHB are associated with perceiving unfair fighting behavior as more permissible by both men and women as a means to establishing a tough reputation. These results provide important theoretical implications for understanding how MHB relate to individuals' perceptions of men's aggressive responses to threats. Simply put, our results indicate that while familial, self, and community protection remain the end goals, the path to get there appears to be one in which the ends justify the means.

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