

## ARTICLE

# Overcoming low status or maintaining high status? A multinational examination of the association between socioeconomic status and honour

Ángel Sánchez-Rodríguez<sup>1</sup>  | Conor O'Dea<sup>2</sup> | Ayse K. Uskul<sup>3,4</sup>  |  
 Alexander Kirchner-Häusler<sup>3,4</sup> | Vivian Vignoles<sup>4</sup> |  
 Phatthanakit Chobthamkit<sup>5</sup> | Rendy Alfiannoor Achmad<sup>6</sup> |  
 Sonny Andrianto<sup>7,8</sup> | Andreas Agung Kristanto<sup>9</sup> | Rahkman Ardi<sup>10</sup> |  
 Cokorda Bagus Jaya Lesmana<sup>11</sup> | Vanessa A. Castillo<sup>12</sup> |  
 Trawin Chaleeraktragoon<sup>5</sup> | Alfred Chan Huan Zhi<sup>13</sup> |  
 Bovornpoch Choompunuch<sup>14</sup> | Susan E. Cross<sup>15</sup> | Son Duc Nguyen<sup>16</sup> |  
 Elaine Frances Fernandez<sup>17</sup> | Fredrick Dermawan Purba<sup>18</sup> | Marc Eric  
 S. Reyes<sup>19</sup> | Meral Gezici Yalçın<sup>20</sup>  | Ahmad Gimmy Prathama Siswadi<sup>18</sup> |  
 Charles Harb<sup>21</sup> | Intan Hashimah Mohd Hashim<sup>22</sup> | Shenel Husnu<sup>23</sup> |  
 Bonar Hutapea<sup>24,25</sup> | The Huy Le Hoang<sup>26</sup> | Keiko Ishii<sup>27</sup> |  
 Rozmi Ismail<sup>28</sup> | Kenichi Ito<sup>29,30</sup> | Luh Ketut Suryani<sup>31</sup> |  
 Tinnaphat Kaewyodthiwat<sup>32</sup> | Konstantinos Kafetsios<sup>33</sup> |  
 Panagiota Karamaouna<sup>3</sup> | Evangelia Kateri<sup>34</sup> | Aqeel Khan<sup>35</sup> |  
 Nuannut Khieowan<sup>33</sup> | Galang Lufityanto<sup>36</sup> | Ma. Elizabeth  
 J. Macapagal<sup>37</sup> | Deviga a/p Marappan<sup>35</sup> | Juan Matamoros-Lima<sup>38</sup> |  
 Rania Miniesy<sup>39</sup> | Ahmad Mustaqim Yusoff<sup>35</sup> | Jinkyung Na<sup>40</sup> |  
 Zafer Özkan<sup>41</sup> | Stefano Pagliaro<sup>42</sup> | Charis Psaltis<sup>43</sup> | Dina Rabie<sup>39</sup> |  
 Mitchell Reinhart<sup>2</sup> | Ahmad Ridfah<sup>44</sup> | Rosa Rodriguez-Bailón<sup>38</sup> |  
 Mai Sumiyati Ishak<sup>45</sup> | Manuel Teresi<sup>39</sup> | Ma. Criselda Tengco-Pacquing<sup>18</sup> |  
 Kulvadee Thongpibul<sup>5</sup> | Minh Thuy Thi Tri<sup>46</sup> | Rika Vira Zwagery<sup>5</sup> |  
 Suci Wisayanti<sup>20</sup> | Chang Yau Hoon<sup>47</sup> | Yukiko Uchida<sup>48</sup>

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For affiliations refer to page 21.

**Correspondence**

Ángel Sánchez-Rodríguez, University of Salamanca, Libreros Street, 30, Salamanca 37008, Spain.  
Email: [angelsr@usal.es](mailto:angelsr@usal.es)

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**Abstract**

We examined the relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and endorsement of honour. We studied the SES-honour link in 5 studies ( $N = 13,635$ ) with participants recruited in different world regions (the Mediterranean and MENA, East Asian, South-East Asian, and Anglo-Western regions) using measures that tap into various different facets of honour. Findings from these studies revealed that individuals who subjectively perceived themselves as belonging to a higher (vs. lower) SES endorsed various facets of honour more strongly (i.e. defence of family honour values and concerns, self-promotion and retaliation values, masculine honour beliefs, emphasis on personal and family social image, the so-called street code). We discuss implications of these findings for the cultural dynamics linked to SES.

**KEYWORDS**

honour culture, social image, subjective social class

## INTRODUCTION

People of different socio-economic statuses (SES) come to have divergent personal and social identities and tend to respond differently to social situations (Manstead, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). It has been argued that this is due to SES exposing individuals to specific forms of ecological milieu that result in cultural contexts with different characteristics (Cohen, 2009). In the current research, we examine in detail one particular feature associated with these cultural contexts that are likely to vary across different SES groups, namely prevalence of a cultural logic of honour, which is associated with heightened importance of securing and maintaining a positive social image (e.g. Cross & Uskul, 2022; Leung & Cohen, 2011). In five studies, we test two competing hypotheses concerning the relationship between SES and manifestations of a cultural logic of honour. We provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between SES and endorsement of a cultural logic of honour using datasets originating from different world regions, many of them underrepresented in the literature, and covering a large set of manifestations of the cultural logic of honour. On one hand, limited resources and scarcity could facilitate the development of honour logic globally. Thus, our *Threat Vulnerability Hypothesis* predicts that scarcity of resources and wealth would predict greater endorsement of honour logic. On the other hand, individuals who see themselves as belonging to higher social class may be the ones most motivated to avoid losing their status which may facilitate the development of honour logic. Thus, our *Status Attachment Hypothesis* predicts that subjective perceptions of one's SES as higher would be associated with greater honour ideology endorsement as a protective factor.

## CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF SES

SES can be defined as individuals' possession of normatively valued social and economic resources (Antonoplis, 2023) and is typically measured by focusing on individuals' objectively definable resources (i.e. income, education; Easterbrook et al., 2020) or their subjective perception of their own social rank in relation to other individuals in their society (Adler et al., 2000). While SES has been studied mainly