WITNESSING MORAL EDUCATORS BREAKING (THEIR) MORAL TEACHINGS, MORALITY AND SELF-REPORTED CRIME

A STUDY ON ADULTS IN TWO COUNTRIES, SWEDEN AND GREECE.

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The present paper extends previous research in terms of integrating social learning with morality theories, under the framework of moral educators' and their conflicting moral influences. Specifically, this study aims to investigate the impact of witnessing moral educators breaking (their) moral teachings on individual's morality and criminal behavior using a sample of two countries, Sweden and Greece, with similar population but entirely different cultural and social characteristics. We focus on three research questions regarding the correlations and (i) the explanatory influence of witnessing this conflict on moral emotions and values by gender and country, (ii) its impact on traditional crime by gender and country and (iii) the impact that witnessing the conflict and morality mutually have on traditional crime in the two countries. Our findings emerge in three key points. First, we found that witnessing moral educators influenced both moral emotions differentially in each country and gender, but only affected Swedish males' moral values. Secondly, our results showed that witnessing moral educators can explain a moderate to small variance of traditional crime only for males in the two countries. Lastly, we found that witnessing moral educators together with morality can explain a moderate variance of traditional crime in the two countries, while gender is highly important for both countries. Findings are discussed in relation to theory and previous research. Future research is recommended in order to expand the understanding of the cultural and social learning processes that inhibit (im)moral contexts and subsequently affect morality and offending.

Keywords: moral educators, moral emotions, moral values, SAT, SLT, morality, self-reported crime

Wordcount: 7985

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years morality has been the center of interest for many criminologists in explaining crime and many studies have successfully established a strong connection between morality and crime. However, most of the contemporary studies in criminology explore either test the direct relationship of morality and crime, and very few explore the determinants of morality and their direct or indirect relations with criminality, which would consequently help us understand indirect causes of criminal behavior (Svensson et al, 2017).

This paradox may be partly explained by the fact that many interdisciplinary studies have already identified a causal relationship of socialization agents with morality and by the fact that famous theories such as control and social learning theories place them as key figures on the individual's propensity to criminality, hence empirically the relationship of socialization agents, morality and criminality is already established at some point. Most research though seems to superficially grasp the associations of measures of social bonds and different aspects of morality during adolescence and childhood, which creates an uncertainty regarding the potency of causal effects (Svensson et al, 2017).

Hence, in this study, we attempt to integrate theory and answer whether the conflicting behavior and teachings of socialization agents, who are here presented as *moral educators* who produce the moral context for the individual, can affect individuals' morality and crime, using a sample of two different countries: Sweden and Greece, two countries with similar population, but entirely different cultural and social processes.

We focus on the framework of social learning theory (SLT), due to its explanatory processes regarding the transmission of moral beliefs and behavior, and propositions of situational action theory (SAT), which attenuates morality as a central concept in the explanation of crime in a detailed manner and should be employed in any attempts to theorize about morality and crime.

What happens, when the moral context for a behavior is provided by moral educators, but the individual witnesses them to violate it? Are there consequences on the morality of the individual and their criminal behavior? If there are consequences, are they consistent through country and gender?

In the following section we will briefly review SLT and its components, followed by morality and SAT and finally, we present moral education as conceptualized in the DEA model of SAT, which demonstrate the relationship between social agents as moral educators, morality and crime and the importance of imitative and experiential learning in the transmission of (im)moral behavior.

THEORY AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory has received a lot of attention from different disciplines and researchers throughout the years, both empirically and theoretically. In criminology, the version of social learning theory that is widely known today is Akers' (1998, 1973) general theory of social learning, however it is not the only one, since other prominent versions and disciplines attempted to explain deviance and crime through social learning as well(Higgins et al., 2006).

One of the most prominent theorists of social learning is Bandura (1977, 1973), who explains human behavior through a framework of cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. His version highlights the importance of observation and modeling of others' attitudes, behaviors and (emotional) reactions. Observational learning can be achieved by observing live models (direct observation of an individual), verbal instructional models (explanations and descriptions of a behavior) and symbolic models (characters that exist in TV programs, books etc.). Deviant behaviors like violence, according to Bandura (1973), can be learned directly or indirectly by role models, reinforced in childhood, and used in adulthood in conflict resolution or as a coping mechanism. The importance of vicarious experiences in human behavior has received considerable theoretical and empirical support (Bandura, 1997, 1995). Nonetheless, previous studies also indicate differences in gender (e.g., Foshee et al., 1999), which is explained by Gwartney-Gibbs and associates (1987) as a difference in the socialization process of boys and girls.

In Criminology, the work of Sutherland (1947, 1939) was the first to associate with social learning, who accentuated social interaction as the central mechanism of differential association theory, a social learning theory which upholds that criminal behavior is learned through communication within significant (intimate) groups, such as parents, school and peers. Burgess and Akers (1966) expanded the differential association theory integrating it with reinforcement theory and including operant conditioning (reinforcement and punishment concepts), introducing their differential association-reinforcement theory, yet Akers (1998, 1985) continued and expanded the theory to a general theory of social learning. His version of the theory included both Sutherland's behavioral and Bandura's cognitive elements, concluding to the four dimensions of differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement and imitation (Akers & Jennings, 2019; Akers & Sellers, 2004). Explaining not only how, but why people engage in -minor or serious- criminal behaviors or not, the main proposition of his version is "that the same learning process in a context of social structure, interaction, and situation, produces both conforming and deviant behavior. The difference lies in the direction...[of]the balance of influences on behavior" (Akers, 1998, p. 50).

Differential association is expanded to include not only direct influence groups (family, school, church etc.), but also indirect and virtual (authority figures, internet, mass media, books etc.) groups (Warr, 2002) and the individuals' behavior is depended on whether the persons he differentially associates with expose him to normative values, definitions and attitudes that are favorable to a behavior or not (together with behavioral models and social rewards/punishers) (Akers & Jennings, 2019).

Definitions can be general, grounded on conventional, moral and other beliefs and cover many behaviors and situations, or specific, beliefs that guide an individual to commit or not specific deviant/criminal actions. Moreover, Akers claims that definitions can include beliefs that are positive (favorable to crime), neutralizing (unfavorable but justifiable to crime) or conventional (unfavorable to crime) (Akers & Jennings, 2019; Akers & Sellers, 2004).

Differential reinforcement can be understood as the process that individuals perceive, anticipate or witness rewards and punishments (the consequences) for a certain behavior and operates through positive and negative reinforcers and punishers, which exert influence on the individual's choice of behavior.

Imitation is the last component of Aker's theory and the most interesting part for our study, which contains the process of observing and modeling the behavior of others and the accompanied consequences (rewards or punishments) of that behavior. Baldwin and Baldwin (1981, p. 187 see Anderson 1999) offer an excellent summary: "*Observers tend to imitate modeled behavior if they like or respect the model, see the model receive reinforcement, see the model give off signs of pleasure, or are in an environment where imitating the model's performance is reinforced... Inverse imitation is common when an observer does not like the model, sees the model get punished, or is in an environment where conformity is being punished*."

The interactive processes that social learning theory proposes regarding the socializing agents and their effects on the individual's conforming or deviant behavior have been repeatedly supported (see for example Reid et al, 2002; Simons et al., 2016), a fact also reported in meta-analysis studies (for example Pratt et al. 2010). Although all four elements, both individually and collectively, have been significantly empirically supported (Akers & Jennings, 2019), little research has focused on the relationship of social learning theory and gender with mixed results (Jennings et al., 2010). Despite the lack of research, many scholars have argued that the causal processes that lead to offending are similar across gender, but the extent to which they experience and react to these processes is different (ibid).

In summary, except verbal transmission of morals, observing (im)moral behaviors in the learning process, which can derive from both direct and indirect influence groups, could potentially affect morality and future crime, especially in the form of vicarious learning, when the cultural or social capital allows its manifestation. But how morality is affected and how it affects further criminal behavior?

Morality and SAT

Various disciplines have explored the concept of morality throughout the years; From Durkheim's (1925[1961]) sociological and romantic view of a solidary society with morality as the glue that holds it together, to psychological studies of moral reasoning, development, and behavior (Kohlberg, 1969; Piaget, 1932), morality is a construct that is viewed as a result of the socialization process. In Criminology, morality, which is defined by Svensson and associates (2017, p. 292) as "a set of attitudes about what is right or wrong, or good or bad, to do in a given situation", is instrumental in many theories such as control, social learning and integrated theories in the form of beliefs, values and less often, emotions (ibid). Moral beliefs have been repeatedly associated with traditional morality as a

predictor of criminal behavior in social learning and control theories through definitions and social bonds respectfully (Antonaccio & Tittle, 2008).

One of the most prominent contemporary theories, Situational Action Theory, which views morality as the central cause of crime (Wikström, 2010), conceptualizes morality in a very methodical way, however the theory is too complicated and not completely relevant to fully explain in this paper, since we cannot account for situational mechanisms. Nonetheless, SAT holds moral beliefs and habits as the most important individual characteristics that influence the possibility of an individual engaging in crime (Wikström & Treiber, 2007). In contrast with moral beliefs, which are conceptualized to affect the perception-choice of the individual (together with moral rules of the context) and allow a deliberate choice between two alternatives (crime-no crime), moral habits can affect the choice either by realizing a familiar motivation, or by emotional stimulus, overriding the processes of rational choice (Wikström & Treiber, 2007; Wikström, 2006). Depending on the moral correspondence of the individual's moral filter and the motivation (induced morality) of the setting, a deliberated or habitual action can be triggered (Wikström, 2010). The action however depends on several internal (self-control, shame and guilt) and external (setting deterrence) controls during this moral correspondence process.

Our interest lies in the internal controls, specifically in the moral emotions of shame and guilt, which moral emotions are seen in the literature as regulating the individuals' behavioral choices and moral behavior and generally play an important role in moral judgement and motivation (Svensson et al., 2017). Svensson and colleagues argue that moral emotions, can be seen as a result of the socialization process. Shame and guilt emerge during primary socialization within family, with parental techniques on learning moral rules and norms being important for the levels of shame and guilt the individual feels when breaking moral rules of conduct, and during the stage of secondary socialization they are nurtured or adjusted through school and peers. When norms are internalized, the individual will feel shame or guilt when committing a certain crime, in the context of the learned moral spectrum of the norm. When norms are not internalized as a consequence of poor socialization processes, the individual will not feel shame or guilt when committing the act (ibid). Many scholars have used different measures of shame or guilt and have found significant connections with crime (ibid). Notwithstanding the approach in measurement, there is abundant evidence that support the notion that moral commitments or feelings exhibit crime-deterring effects and morality in general predicts criminal behavior (Antonaccio & Tittle, 2008).

Despite the evidence of the importance of moral emotions in criminal behavior, Svensson and associates (2017, 2013) have repeatedly reported that very few studies have investigated the connection of shame, guilt, moral values and offending while controlling for other, (theoretically) relevant variables, while only Svensson and colleagues (2017) focus on gender differences including these constructs. Nevertheless, previous research has found that differences in gender exist between socialization and morality; Girls have been found to have stronger bonds with parents and school, higher moral values and more feelings of shame and guilt (ibid), indicating that there may exist gendered processes in socialization that affect morality and crime we should be aware of.

Hence, a study incorporating shame, guilt, moral values and offending by gender in relation with socialization agents and processes could serve as a starting point

to start confronting this gap in the literature. The socializing agents that could possibly provide the moral context for the individual, are discussed below under the framework of moral education as it was conceptualized by Wikström (2020).

Moral education

Wikström (2020) developed the Developmental Ecological Action Model (DEA), to explain the dynamics of stability and change in criminal careers through integrating individual/developmental and ecological/environmental traditions. He argues that "what largely drives stability and change in people's crime propensity are psychosocial processes of moral education and cognitive nurturing and what principally drives stability and change in people's criminogenic exposure are socioecological processes of social and self-selection" (Wikström, 2020 p.195). Wikström (2020) defines moral education as "the continuous learning and evaluation process by which people come to adopt, modify and change value-based and emotionally grounded rules of conduct about what is the right or wrong thing to do or not to do in particular circumstances" (p. 196) and identifies instruction, observation and trial and error as the central (sub) mechanisms. He continues to point out that the role of law and justice system in moral education is a very important part of the emergence and changes in one's crime propensity as people continuously evaluate their moral experiences versus previous acquired cognitive abilities and morals. Thus, moral education is a continuous process. Socioecological processes are also important for our study, albeit only in the manner of the explanatory context it offers on individuals' social context, where according to Wikström (ibid), people vary on their activity fields in each social context, with the cultural and structural conditions impacting the differential exposures and pressures inducted in settings. Therefore, the content of that social context can be different for different kinds of social groups, influencing their exposure; men's criminogenic exposure can vary from women's' in each social context, native peoples from foreign and so on.

The moral contents of the individual's activity field bestow the input to the process of the moral education (Wikström, 2020). In simple words, the everyday interactions with significant others (parents, school, friends etc.) and media exposure (newspaper, books, news, internet etc.) determine the kind and effectiveness of moral teachings and experiences an individual receives. For the purposes of the paper these significant others and indirect sources of moral teachings will be referred to as *moral educators*, since they are already portrayed as such in the literature, albeit not clearly stated. Research has repeatedly reviewed the relationship of significant others and the individuals' subsequent behavior, but also media exposure; In fact, there's a large body of research on the relationship between media and subsequent behavior, predominantly violent media and pro-social messages (see reviews by Anderson & Bushman, 2001;Anderson et al., 2003; Huesmann, 2007; Mares & Woodard, 2005), however there's hardly any study that we know of that identifies indirect moral educators as such and focuses on conflicting moral behavior and teachings.

In reviewing the literature, we argue that moral educators provide the moral input for the individual through social learning processes. These processes may incorporate observation, imitation and verbal instruction, and their context can influence the individual's moral values and emotions, which operate as internal controls against criminal behavior, but also deviant behavior itself.

Current study

This study extends previous research in terms of integrating social learning with morality theories, under the framework of moral educators' and their conflicting moral influences. Specifically, we aim to investigate the impact of witnessing moral educators breaking moral teachings on individual's morality and criminal behavior. Based on the literature, we argue that through social learning processes, individuals learn, observe and adopt (im)moral behavior, which consequently influences their morality (moral values and emotions) and deviant behavior. Moral educators are the source of the individual's moral beliefs, values and emotions: Parents, teachers, peers, authoritative figures and television are some examples of moral educators that can provide the moral content to the individual in their broad social context. Furthermore, the cultural and social context produces pressures and differentially exposes different groups to (criminogenic) settings, and the content and mechanisms of social teaching is sometimes gendered, thus patterns in gender are expected to be different.

As far as we know, no studies so far directly explore the influence of experience on morality and crime, as a moral learning process, when simultaneously controlling for the moral behavior as taught by the same moral educator. What happens when an individual learns a moral rule from a moral educator, but witnesses him/her to do the opposite?

In this paper we aim to explore the following questions:

(i) Whether witnessing direct (family, teachers) and indirect (political representatives, television people) moral educators breaking their moral teachings is negatively correlated with and can explain a proportion of individual's morality (shame, guilt and moral values) for each gender in two countries: Sweden and Greece.

(ii) Whether witnessing moral educators (direct-indirect) breaking their moral teachings is positively correlated with and can explain a proportion of traditional crime, for each gender in the two countries.

(iii) Whether witnessing moral educators breaking moral teaching together with morality can explain a significant proportion of traditional crime in the two countries.

METHODS

Procedure

Before the original survey for the study, a pilot study was conducted to acknowledge whether the items for witnessing moral educators breaking their moral teachings, were appropriate and well understood. The pilot study was scored by 55 acquaintances (classmates and friends) from Sweden and Greece,

who were employed by the researcher online. The study included both open-ended and closed-ended questions, aimed to verify the suitability of the items.

After the pilot study, the original study was conducted online, and all the information and measures were presented in English. The questionnaire was anonymous and was posted online in Greece and Sweden to two social media pages, Facebook and Reddit, in groups that included over 1000 people, to retain the anonymity status. The survey was posted as a link that led to the survey tool SUNET, accompanied with a message that informed possible participants regarding the nature of the study, without disclosing information that could create bias. By clicking on the link, volunteers had the opportunity to read the information letter and a consent box was offered.

The participants then were presented with sociodemographic questions regarding their gender (coded 0 for male and 1 for female), age, ethnicity, education level and employment and then were introduced to Likert-like questions regarding their social environment experiences (witnessing moral educators breaking their own rules), moral emotions, moral values and self-reported criminality.

Although online surveys are limited in the sense that they can include biased respondents, over/under-reporting and the sample may not be representative of the population (Andrade, 2020), they can offer plasticity in design, quicker and larger participation and when used in criminology in conjunction with self-reported crime, they can offer an insight on dark figures of crime. Whereas self-reports of crime may be seen as to produce some limitations, such as participation and response rate, validity of responses and recollection issues, the last decades they have gained more credibility and are considered a good measure of crime and theory testing (Junger-Tas & Marshall, 1999). Today, they are generally seen as more reliable and solid that official reports of crime, as official records generally fail to address the dark figures of crime; certain crime types usually are not reported, not recorded or can go undetected (Dodd et al., 2004). Thus, we addressed participation and response rate issues by using online surveys, which offer faster and wider rates of participation. Despite the weaknesses of (online) surveys and self-reports, this method is considered more appropriate due to its strengths when examining associations and testing theories. Especially in a Covid-19 period, we also needed to consider health first, therefore online surveys were deemed as necessary to avoid contamination of the participants and the researcher.

Sample

Data were collected from 677 participants. First, we proceeded on clearing the sample. Seven individuals were excluded for fake answers (patterns of extreme or low values in all answer alternatives), ten for numerous and key missing values, and one was excluded as the option “other” on gender had only one answer and could not be investigated. Our final sample consists of 659 individuals, which are presented by country in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Sociodemographic Characteristics				
	Sweden		Greece	
	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency
Gender:				
Male	73.1%	256	37.5%	116
Female	26.9%	94	62.5%	193
Age:				
18-30	65.1%	228	56.3%	174
30-45	28.3%	99	37.9%	117
45+	6.6%	23	5.8%	18
Education:				
Primary School	1.1%	4	0.3%	1
Some High School	4%	14	0.6%	2
High school	37.1%	130	28.8%	89
Vocational or Trade School	5.4%	19	1.9%	6
Bachelor's Degree	31.4%	110	37.9%	117
Master's Degree	18.6%	65	28.5%	88
Ph.D. or higher	2.3%	8	1.9%	6
Employment:				
Self-employed	3.1%	11	11%	34
Fully employed	41.7%	146	41.7%	129
Partly employed	8.3%	29	11%	34
Student	38.6%	135	24.9%	77
Unemployed	7.7%	27	11.3%	35
Retired	0.6%	2	-	-

Measures

Independent variables

Moral educators: The first measure was about witnessing moral educators breaking their moral teachings. The items were conceptualized by the researcher and the actions included were based on the moral foundations' theory categories (Graham et al, 2012) and everyday life situations. The measure comprised of four sub-scales: parents/caregivers, teachers, political representatives and people on television media; All the items were examined in a pilot study and were found to have very good internal consistency (n=55). Of the original twenty-seven, twenty-two items were chosen to be included in the final sub-scales, to avoid problems with redundancy as some of the items caused sub-scales to exceed alpha recommendations beyond .94. The items used for each subscale and the potential response alternatives can be found in Appendix 1.1. However, it should be noted here that indirect moral educators, were conceptualized as continuities of moral education; moral behaviors were already taught in primary and secondary education, and therefore the items differ in the sense that the behavior is thought as learned and only the experience is investigated. Thus, an alternative of "not taught" (computed as system missing) was given only for direct moral educators. The Cronbach's alphas for each sub-scale in both countries were good to excellent: Parents/Caregivers= .75 for Sweden and Greece alike, Teachers= .81 for Sweden and .84 for Greece, Political Representatives= .91 for Sweden and .93 for Greece, Television People= .91 for Sweden and .85 for Greece.

Morality: The second measure was anticipated shame, which measures the degree to which the individuals would feel ashamed if caught committing a crime. The scale comprises of six items and can be found in Appendix 1.2. High scores

indicate strong feelings of shame. The original scale was developed by Wikström (2004) in the PADS+ study and was used in several studies with adolescent samples; our version was adjusted for adults, replacing significant others and crimes to represent adult-life situations. Cronbach's alphas in both Sweden(α=.82) and Greece(α=.85) were found to be very good, verifying that our adjustments in the items were appropriate for both samples.

Next, individuals were introduced to anticipated guilt, which measures the degree to which the individual would feel guilty if he broke certain moral rules and laws. The scale comprises of six items and can be found in Appendix 1.3. High scores indicate strong feelings of guilt. The original scale was developed by Wikström (2004) in the PADS+ study and was later used in many studies in adolescent samples; our version was adjusted for adults, replacing actors, settings and certain acts to represent adult-life situations. Cronbach's alphas in both Sweden(α=.69) and Greece(α=.64) were found to be acceptable, possibly meaning that our adjustments in the items were not as good as they should, or that the concept of anticipated guilt was difficult to comprehend for individuals in both samples.

Last, moral values were presented, which measure the level of the individual's (in)tolerance on rule breaking. The scale comprises of four items and can be found in Appendix 1.4. High scores indicate low moral values (inversed scale prevented fake answers to be undetectable). We used the same scale which was adapted for use by Svensson and Pauwels (2010) as a morality measure for the Antwerp study. Cronbach's alphas in both Sweden(α=.68) and Greece(α=.71) were found to be acceptable to good.

Dependent variables

Traditional crime measured the number of times individuals committed certain criminal acts the last 5 years with fourteen items, which can be found in Appendix 2. The items were summed into an index, excluding robbery because of very limited answers over 0 times, with a Cronbach's alpha of .69 for Sweden and .64 for Greece. The items were previously used by various studies on adolescents' and adults' crime, except of the items "Hit something accidentally with the car and left" and "Used someone you know (e.g., police officer, administration, politician) to avoid sanctions, tickets or to gain something with unconventional means", which were of our own devise.

Ethics

The study was approved by the Ethic's Council for student projects, at the Faculty of Health and Society, Malmö University. All the participants were informed about the purposes of the study, without disclosing specific information that would create biased responses, such as the terms of the measurement tools or the connections between them; the study was presented as social environment experiences, views and self, in connection with self-reported criminal acts. Participants were also informed that participation was voluntary, anonymous, that they had the right to withdraw at any point and that their data will be treated with confidentiality. Contact information of the researcher were given for any questions regarding the study. After the debriefing, individuals were given a consent choice box; all participants stated their consent to participate in the study, whereas those who did not, received a thank you message, and the questionnaire was closed. The study included sensitive data of the participants, such as

sociodemographic characteristics and self-reports of crime, therefore the anonymity of the participants was ensured.

Since the collection of data was completely anonymous and performed in social media groups that involved over 1000 people, and because the collection of data was carried out in many groups simultaneously, any identification of the participants was impossible. Collected data were only analyzed at a group level and were only available to the researcher, whereas data were kept in a secure password-protected laptop, kept in the researcher's residence in all times. Finally, participation in the study was not expected to have any potential negative consequences for the participants.

ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

Analysis includes three parts, in each of which we will use ordinary least-squares regression analysis (OLS) to test the hypotheses. Even though OLS does not work well will skewed dependent variables and may cause biased linear estimators (McClendon, 1994), such as self-reports of crime, our dependent variables were found to be well-fitted with minor skewedness. To determine the required number of participants for this study, an a-priori power analysis for OLS linear regression analysis was conducted in GPower (Faul et al., 2009). Since both separate and combined regression models will be built for men and women in both countries, power was calculated for a regression model with just men or just women from Sweden and Greece.

First, we will test the explained variance of witnessing moral educators breaking their moral teachings (parents, teachers, political representatives and television people) to morality (anticipated shame, anticipated guilt and moral values) separately for the two countries. The first model will include the sociodemographic variables of age and education. In the second model, witnessing direct moral educators (parents and teachers) will be entered and finally, witnessing indirect moral educators (political representatives and television people) will be entered in the third model. Each of the three dependent variables anticipated shame, anticipated guilt and moral values will include the same models.

Then, we intent to estimate the explained variance of witnessing moral educators to traditional crime for our second question. Analysis will be conducted separately for the two countries and between gender in the same fashion.

Finally, for our third question, due to inadequate sampling power and since we will use more independent variables in the models, we will conduct the analysis between countries only. The first model will include the sociodemographic variables of gender, age and education; In the second model, witnessing moral educators' sub-scales will be entered and in the third model, morality scales will be included as well, with dependent variable traditional crime.

All the analyses will be conducted using IBM SPPS Statistics 27.

RESULTS

Normality of the data was examined using Histograms and Q-Q plots and no particular issues with normality were found. Some outliers existed, however we proceeded with including them for two reasons: First, we investigated the data, and they were not caused by any error, hence they represented the variability of the answers. Secondly, outliers reflect a part of the population we study and should not be removed, unless there are specific reasons to. Table 2. presents the descriptive statistics for the variables included in the study by country and gender. The correlation matrix for each country is presented in Table 3. The bivariate associations are in the expected direction.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables.

	Sweden			Greece		
	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD))	Mean (SD)
Witnessing M.E:						
Parents (2-25)	8.85 (3.45)	9.62 (3.97)	8.67 (3.20)	10.84 (3.79)	10.74 (3.90)	11.01 (3.60)
Teachers (1-24)	10.12 (3.74)	10.41 (3.97)	10.02 (3.65)	12.86 (4.29)	12.39 (4.10)	13.63 (4.50)
Political Rep (6-30)	17.74 (5.88)	17.62 (6.56)	17.78 (5.62)	24.01 (5.38)	24.17 (5.01)	23.74 (5.95)
Television People (6-30)	19.33 (5.91)	19.51 (6.18)	19.26 (5.81)	24.68 (4.04)	24.59 (4.02)	24.83 (4.07)
Morality:						
Anticipated Shame (6-18)	14.17 (3.27)	15.22 (2.91)	13.78 (3.32)	15.24 (3.14)	15.76 (2.79)	14.37 (3.50)
Anticipated Guilt (6-18)	14.66 (2.36)	15.18 (2.20)	14.47 (2.40)	14.53 (2.33)	14.95 (2.22)	13.84 (2.37)
Moral Values (4-18)	8.50 (2.71)	8.27 (2.51)	8.58 (2.78)	8.92 (2.84)	8.40 (2.63)	9.79 (2.96)
Traditional crime (0-25)	1.93 (2.74)	1.24 (1.73)	2.18 (2.99)	3.22 (3.45)	2.35 (2.60)	4.66 (4.14)

Min-Max values are in parenthesis to the left column

Witnessing moral educators and morality

Our first objective ***(i)*** was to examine whether witnessing direct (family, teachers) and indirect (political representatives, television people) moral educators breaking their moral teachings can explain a proportion of individual's morality (shame, guilt and moral values) for each gender in two countries: Sweden and Greece. To scrutinize this question, we conducted three OLS regression analyses by country separately for each gender with dependent variables anticipated shame, anticipated guilt and moral values. All models were tested for collinearity and the variance inflation factor (VIF) revealed no values over 2.1, which indicates no problematic multicollinearity in our variables. Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 presents the coefficients for the four OLS models of the tested *anticipated shame model, the anticipated guilt model* and *the moral values model* respectfully.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix (Pearson's r)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sweden											
1. Sex	1.00										
2. Age	-0.05	1.00									
3. Education	0.14**	0.29**	1.00								
4. Parents	0.13*	-0.02	-0.02	1.00							
5. Teachers	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.23**	1.00						
6. Political Representatives	-0.01	0.09	0.14**	0.17**	0.43**	1.00					
7. Television People	0.01	0.06	0.17**	0.22**	0.45**	0.65**	1.00				
8. Anticipated Shame	0.19**	-0.05	0.09	-0.15**	-0.12*	-0.13*	-0.15**	1.00			
9. Anticipated Guilt	0.13*	0.06	0.16**	-0.22**	-0.23**	-0.09	-0.13**	0.53**	1.00		
10. Moral values	-0.05	-0.05	-0.08	0.22**	0.23**	0.15**	0.15**	-0.38**	-0.51**	1.00	
11. Traditional Crime	-0.15**	-0.01	-0.09	0.34**	0.26**	0.09	0.17**	-0.30**	-0.41**	0.38**	1.00
Greece											
1. Sex	1.00										
2. Age	0.07	1.00									
3. Education	0.11	0.29**	1.00								
4. Parents	-0.03	-0.16**	-0.13*	1.00							
5. Teachers	-0.14*	-0.13*	-0.07	0.30**	1.00						
6. Political Representatives	0.03	-0.03	0.03	0.12*	0.20**	1.00					
7. Television People	-0.02	-0.07	-0.03	0.09	0.27**	0.52**	1.00				
8. Anticipated Shame	0.21**	0.15**	0.11*	-0.15**	-0.09	-0.17**	-0.08	1.00			
9. Anticipated Guilt	0.23**	0.11*	0.14*	-0.17**	-0.14**	-0.06	0.06	0.48**	1.00		
10. Moral values	-0.23**	-0.06	-0.12*	0.19**	0.17**	0.00	-0.00	-0.29**	-0.45**	1.00	
11. Traditional Crime	-0.32**	-0.03	0.04	0.12*	0.13*	0.00	-0.02	-0.29**	-0.36**	0.39**	1.00

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

Anticipated shame model

The first model was significant only for females in the two countries and shows significant correlations with anticipated shame with females in Sweden and Greece explaining a 7% and 3%. Age correlates positively only with females in Greece, which indicates that they anticipate more shame as their age increases.

Education presents significant positive correlations with Swedish females. Thus, more education leads to more anticipated shame for Swedish females and Greek males.

In the second model, witnessing direct moral educators (parents, teachers) is introduced, of which only parents negatively correlate with Swedish males. This means that the more they witness parents breaking their moral teaching, the less anticipated shame they report. The model raised the explanatory power in Sweden by 5% and by 2% in Greece. The model was insignificant for Greek males.

When witnessing indirect moral educators is introduced in the third model, the explanatory power is almost doubled for men in both countries, explaining a variance of 9% in Sweden and 13% in Greece, whereas women's variance is increased only by 1% (to 13% and 6% respectfully). Witnessing television people seem to slightly negatively correlate (0.05 significance) with anticipated shame in Swedish males, together with witnessing parents, which means that witnessing both parents and television people breaking (their) moral teachings reduces anticipated shame for Swedish males. Political representatives negatively correlate with shame in Greek males, while the education correlation becomes irrelevant. This may indicate that when individuals witness political representatives breaking moral teachings, high education is no longer relevant and anticipated shame reduces. Swedish females though retain the education correlation, but witnessing teachers becomes significantly and negatively correlated with shame, indicating that witnessing teachers breaking their moral teachings reduces shame, but the higher the education the more shame individuals anticipate. In all three models, Greek females' anticipated shame is only associated with age.

Anticipated guilt model

The first model was significant only for Swedish males. Education was positively associated with anticipated guilt and explained a 3% of the variance. This indicates that the more education Swedish males have, the more shame they anticipate.

The second model which included witnessing direct moral educators was significant only for males in both countries. Specifically, the correlation of education for Swedish males remains and witnessing both parents and teachers is significantly and negatively correlated with guilt, while the explanatory power of the model rises sharply to 18%. This means that witnessing both parents and teachers moderately reduces the individual's guilt. For Greek males, witnessing teachers breaking their moral rules is negatively correlated with anticipated guilt and the model's explained variance raises from 1% to 10%.

Lastly, political representatives and television people are entered into the third model, which is insignificant for Swedish females. The correlations and explanatory power remain the same as in model 3 for males in both countries, however both indirect moral educators are moderately significant for Greek females, explaining a proportion of 10%. Specifically, political representatives are negatively correlated with guilt, meaning that witnessing them breaking moral teachings moderately reduces guilt, whereas television people are positively correlated with guilt, showing that witnessing them breaking moral teachings moderately increases the individual's anticipated guilt.

Table 4.1 Coefficients for OLS Regression Analysis with dependent Anticipated Shame

	Sweden								Greece							
	Males				Females				Males				Females			
Model	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2
1. (Constant)	14.20***	.93			13.07***	1.47			11.71***	1.50			13.90***	1.05		
Age	-.32	.35	-.06		-.32	.54	-.06		.07	.54	.01		.96**	.34	.20	
Education	.08	.16	.03	.00	.63**	.23	.28	.07	.54*	.26	.20	.04	-.12	.17	-.05	.03
2. (Constant)	16.75***	1.16			14.62***	1.67			14.16***	2.12			15.47***	1.40		
Age	-.30	.34	-.05		-.21	.54	-.04		-.14	.56	-.02		.90**	.34	.19	
Education	.05	.16	.02		.66**	.22	.30		.55*	.26	.20		-.16	.17	-.07	
Parents	-.20**	.06	-.20		-.06	.07	-.09		-.14	.09	-.15		-.08	.05	-.12	
Teachers	-.06	.05	-.07	.05	-.12	.07	-.16	.12	-.02	.07	-.03	.06	-.02	.05	-.03	.05
3. (Constant)	17.70***	1.19			14.13***	1.75			18.09***	2.82			15.22***	1.78		
Age	-.27	.33	-.05		-.19	.54	-.03		-.08	.54	-.01		.93**	.34	.19	
Education	.16	.16	.06		.63**	.23	.28		.48	.25	.18		-.14	.17	-.06	
Parents	-.19**	.06	-.18		-.09	.07	-.12		-.15	.09	-.15		-.08	.05	-.11	
Teachers	.01	.06	.01		-.18*	.09	-.25		.02	.07	.02		-.01	.05	-.02	
Political Representatives	-.04	.04	-.06		.05	.06	.11		-.13*	.05	-.23		-.07	.05	-.13	
Television People	-.09*	.04	-.16	.09	.03	.06	.06	.13	-.04	.09	-.05	.13	.07	.06	.10	.06

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Note: B= unstandardized regression coefficient, SE= standard error, β= standardized regression coefficient

Table 4.2 Coefficients for OLS Regression Analysis with dependent Anticipated Guilt

	Sweden								Greece							
	Males				Females				Males				Females			
Model	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2
1. (Constant)	12.93***	.65			14.00***	1.15			12.78***	1.03			13.02***	.83		
Age	.17	.24	.04		.03	.42	.00		.07	.37	.01		.39	.27	.10	
Education	.27*	.11	.15	.03	.24	.18	.14	.02	.19	.18	.10	.01	.19	.13	.10	.02
2. (Constant)	16.14***	.77			15.04***	1.31			16.08***	1.41			13.70***	1.13		
Age	.19	.22	.05		.12	.42	.03		-.23	.37	-.06		.36	.27	.09	
Education	.23*	.10	.13		.26	.18	.15		.24	.17	.13		.17	.13	.09	
Parents	-.21***	.04	-.29		-.03	.05	-.06		-.11	.06	-.17		-.06	.04	-.10	
Teachers	-.12***	.03	-.19	.18	-.09	.06	-.17	.06	-.10*	.05	-.20	.10	.01	.04	.02	.03
3. (Constant)	16.36***	.80			14.82***	1.38			15.94***	1.94			11.76***	1.39		
Age	.19	.22	.05		.12	.43	.03		-.25	.37	-.06		.46	.27	.12	
Education	.27*	.10	.15		.24	.18	.14		.20	.17	.13		.18	.13	.10	
Parents	-.21***	.04	-.28		-.04	.06	-.08		-.11	.06	-.17		-.05	.04	-.10	
Teachers	-.10*	.04	-.15		-.13	.07	-.24		-.11*	.05	-.21		-.00	.04	-.00	
Political Representatives	.01	.03	.03		.03	.05	.10		-.02	.04	-.06		-.10**	.03	-.23	
Television People	-.04	.03	-.11	.18	.00	.05	.02	.06	.02	.06	.04	.10	.17***	.04	.31	.10

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Note: B= unstandardized regression coefficient, SE= standard error, β= standardized regression coefficient

Table 4.3 Coefficients for OLS Regression Analysis with dependent Moral Values

	Sweden								Greece							
	Males				Females				Males				Females			
Model	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2
1. (Constant)	9.66***	.77			8.90***	1.32			10.94***	1.29			9.79***	1.00		
Age	-.19	.29	-.04		-.02	.48	-.00		-.06	.47	-.01		-.15	.33	-.03	
Education	-.13	.13	-.06	.00	-.12	.20	-.06	.00	-.21	.22	-.09	.01	-.20	.16	-.09	.01
2. (Constant)	6.16***	.93			7.73***	1.51			7.37***	1.79			7.73***	1.33		
Age	-.21	.27	-.04		-.11	.48	-.02		.26	.47	.05		-.07	.32	-.01	
Education	-.09	.12	-.04		-.14	.20	-.07		-.26	.22	-.11		-.14	.16	-.06	
Parents	.20***	.05	.24		.04	.06	.07		.14	.08	.17		.10*	.05	.15	
Teachers	.15***	.04	.20	.13	.09	.06	.15	.03	.09	.06	.14	.07	.03	.04	.05	.04
3. (Constant)	5.72***	.96			7.99***	1.59			6.69***	2.46			9.54***	1.69		
Age	-.22	.27	-.05		-.15	.49	-.03		.25	.47	.05		-.13	.33	-.03	
Education	-.15	.13	-.07		-.14	.21	-.07		-.25	.22	-.11		-.10	.16	-.04	
Parents	.20***	.05	.23		.06	.07	.09		.14	.08	.17		.11*	.05	.16	
Teachers	.11*	.05	.15		.10	.08	.17		.09	.06	.13		.06	.05	.09	
Political Representatives	.01	.03	.03		.01	.05	.04		.03	.05	.06		-.03	.04	-.06	
Television People	.04	.03	.09	.14	-.03	.06	-.09	.04	-.00	.07	-.00	.08	-.05	.05	-.09	.05

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Note: B= unstandardized regression coefficient, SE= standard error, β= standardized regression coefficient

Moral values model

Model 1 was insignificant for both genders in the two countries. Model 2 was found significant only for Swedish males, with both direct moral educators being moderately and positively significant with moral values. This indicates that witnessing parents and teachers breaking their moral teachings moderately reduces moral values (note that high scores in moral values denote low moral values). The variance that the model explained for Swedish males was 13%.

The third model was also significant only for Swedish males, however the increase in the explained variance was merely 1% and no significant correlations were found with indirect moral educators.

Witnessing moral educators and traditional crime

Our second objective ***(ii)*** was to examine whether witnessing moral educators (direct-indirect) breaking their moral teachings, can explain a proportion of traditional crime, for each gender in the two countries. To scrutinize this question, we conducted OLS regression analysis by country separately for each gender with dependent variable *traditional crime*. The model was tested for collinearity and the variance inflation factor (VIF) revealed no values over 2.1, which indicates no problematic multicollinearity in our variables. Table 5 presents the coefficients for the *traditional crime model*.

The first model that included age and education was not significant for the two countries and genders. When witnessing direct moral educators (parents and teachers) is entered into the second model, it becomes significant only for males in the two countries. Specifically, both witnessing parents and teachers are significantly and positively correlated with traditional crime for Swedish males, explaining a moderate variance of 23%. This means that the more individuals witness parents and teachers breaking their moral teaching, the more crime they commit. For Greek males, witnessing teachers was only positively and significantly correlated with traditional crime, explaining a variance of 10%.

Then the third model is introduced, where witnessing indirect moral educators (political representatives and television people) is entered into the model. Model 3 was only significant for males in the two countries; however, the correlations remain the same and the explained variance is only increased to 24% for Swedish males and 12% for Greek males[1].

Witnessing moral educators, morality and crime

Our third objective ***(iii)*** was to examine whether witnessing moral educators breaking moral teaching together with morality can explain a significant proportion of traditional crime in the two countries. To answer this question, we conducted OLS regression analysis by country with dependent variable *traditional crime*.

[1] To determine if skewness affected our results, we run a Linear Probability Model, with crime as a dichotomized outcome. The results followed the same trend with weaker correlations, except Greek males, which did not fit the models. However, the mean value (0.9) of the dichotomized crime variable for Greek men may present an explanation instead, since in their majority they seem to have committed at least one crime the last five years, which renders the relationship with the independent variables insignificant.

Table 5 Coefficients for OLS Regression Analysis with dependent Traditional Crime

	Sweden								Greece							
	Males				Females				Males				Females			
Model	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2
1. (Constant)	2.86***	.83			1.46	.91			2.91	1.81			2.40*	.99		
Age	.03	.31	.00		.01	.33	.00		.09	.65	.01		-.41	.32	-.09	
Education	-.18	.14	-.08	.00	-.05	.14	-.03	.00	.33	.31	.10	.01	.21	.16	.09	.01
2. (Constant)	-2.16*	.94			.39	1.03			-2.96	2.46			2.25	1.34		
Age	.00	.27	.00		-.02	.33	-.00		.62	.65	.09		-.41	.33	-.09	
Education	-.12	.13	-.05		-.05	.14	-.04		.30	.30	.09		.21	.16	.09	
Parents	.35***	.05	.38		.07	.04	.16		.30**	.11	.26		.00	.05	.00	
Teachers	.17***	.04	.21	.23	.04	.04	.10	.04	.10	.08	.10	.10	.00	.04	.00	.01
3. (Constant)	-2.13*	.98			.11	1.09			.23	3.36			1.82	1.70		
Age	.02	.27	.00		.02	.34	.00		.70	.65	.10		-.41	.33	-.09	
Education	-.14	.13	-.06		-.06	.14	-.05		.23	.30	.07		.18	.16	.08	
Parents	.35***	.05	.38		.06	.04	.13		.28*	.11	.25		-.00	.05	-.00	
Teachers	.17***	.05	.21		.03	.05	.07		.14	.09	.15		-.00	.05	-.00	
Political Representatives	-.05	.03	-.11		-.01	.04	-.05		-.01	.07	-.02		.05	.04	.10	
Television People	.05	.03	.11	.24	.03	.04	.13	.05	-.12	.10	-.12	.12	-.02	.05	.03	.02

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Note: B= unstandardized regression coefficient, SE= standard error, β= standardized regression coefficient

The model was tested for collinearity and the variance inflation factor (VIF) revealed no values over 1.9, which indicates no problematic multicollinearity in our variables. Table 6 presents the coefficients for the *traditional crime model*.

The first model included the sociodemographic variables gender, age and education. Gender was negatively correlated with crime in both countries, suggesting that men commit more crime in both countries. The model explained a variance of 2% for Sweden and 11% for Greece. Then witnessing moral educators (parents, teachers, political representatives and television people) breaking moral teachings is entered into the second model. The model increases the association with gender in Sweden, with parents and teachers being positively correlated with crime. This means that the more individuals witness parents and teachers breaking their moral teachings, the more crime they commit. Witnessing parents also positively correlates with crime in Greece, however the model increases the explained variance only by 2%, whereas in Sweden the variance sharply rises to 20%.

Table 6. Coefficients for OLS Regression Analysis with dependent Traditional Crime

	Sweden				Greece			
Model	B	SE	β	R^2	B	SE	β	R^2
1. (Constant)	2.74***	.67			3.98***	.94		
Gender	-.87**	.33	-.14		-2.36***	.38	-.33	
Age	.02	.25	.00		-.21	.32	-.03	
Education	-.14	.11	-.07	.02	.26	.15	.09	.11
2. (Constant)	-.89	.78			2.82	1.66		
Gender	-1.21***	.30	-.19		-2.30***	.38	-.32	
Age	.01	.22	.00		-.10	.32	-.01	
Education	-.12	.10	-.06		.29	.15	.10	
Parents	.25***	.04	.31		.10*	.05	.11	
Teachers	.14***	.04	.20		.05	.04	.07	
Political Representatives	-.04	.03	-.10		.01	.04	.02	
Television People	.04	.03	.09	.20	-.06	.05	-.07	.13
3. (Constant)	2.41	1.48			4.87*	2.19		
Gender	-.87**	.29	-.14		-1.53***	.37	-.21	
Age	.06	.21	.01		.00	.29	.00	
Education	-.02	.10	-.01		.40**	.14	.14	
Parents	.18***	.03	.23		.03	.04	.04	
Teachers	.09**	.04	.13		.02	.04	.03	
Political Representatives	-.04	.02	-.10		-.01	.03	-.01	
Television People	.03	.02	.06		-.02	.05	-.02	
Anticipated Shame	-.04	.04	-.05		-.12*	.06	-.11	
Anticipated Guilt	-.23***	.07	-.20		-.22**	.09	-.15	
Moral Values	.17**	.05	.16	.30	.30***	.06	.24	.27

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Note: B= unstandardized regression coefficient, SE= standard error, β= standardized regression coefficient

Finally, morality (anticipated shame, guilt and moral emotions) is entered into the third model. For Sweden, morality partly mediates the effects of gender and witnessing moral educators and anticipated guilt and shame correlate with crime. The less guilt and less moral values individuals have, the more crime they commit. For Greece, a different pattern emerges. Whereas morality mediates

witnessing moral educators, the importance of witnessing parents disappears, and education becomes positively related with crime, with anticipated guilt, shame and moral values correlating with crime; the more educated individuals are and the less morality they have, the more crime they commit. The third model doubles the explained variance for both countries, to a moderate 30% for Sweden and a moderate 27% for Greece[2].

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the influence that observing of conflicting moral educators' behavior and moral teachings has on morality and criminal behavior. For that purpose, we collected data from two countries, Sweden and Greece, with the same population but very different cultural and social characteristics and we posed three questions regarding (i)the explanatory influence of witnessing this conflict on moral emotions and values by gender and country, (ii) its impact on traditional crime by gender and country and (iii) the impact that witnessing the conflict and morality mutually have on traditional crime in the two countries. Answering these questions, our findings emerge in three key points.

First, we found that witnessing moral educators influenced both moral emotions differentially in each country and gender, but only affected Swedish males' moral values. Our findings are in line with SAT propositions, that there is a causal relationship of primary and secondary socialization mechanisms and morality, and SLT proposals that -direct and indirect- influence groups can transmit morals. Furthermore, previous research has found a relationship between parents, school and changes in morality (Svensson et al. 2013), however no previous research has attempted to investigate the influence of conflicting observed and learned moral behavior on morality. In our view, the most compelling explanation for the present findings is that the (moral) experience of a crime event, witnessing a crime event or being a victim may lead to re-evaluation of morals, or even to normalization of behavior and an automated response (Wikström, 2020); Since witnessing crime events can affect morals, we argue that at some extent, witnessing behaviors with a moral context can also affect morals as such, as long as the actors belong to the spectrum of the individual's moral education. Another explanation could derive from SLT, that most frequent and reinforced behaviors will most likely be chosen by the individual despite the presence of alternatives (Akers & Jennings, 2019), hence when the individual witnesses often immoral behaviors, definitions and moral emotions can be affected. Furthermore, our findings regarding moral values possibly suggest either a limitation in the measurement, since we only used four strong statements that are difficult to be negatively scored, or that direct moral educators exert more influence on Swedish males because of cultural socialization. Greek males do not present the same

[2] To determine if skewness affected our results, we run again a Linear Probability Model, with crime as a dichotomized outcome. The results followed the same trend, although with weaker correlations.

trend; however, this may be attributed to their low participance rate which may not be representative for the male population.

An interesting finding was that of gender differences. Interestingly, for females, sociodemographic variables were more significant in the explanation of anticipated shame, only witnessing indirect moral educators affected anticipated guilt for Greek females, whereas models did not fit for moral values, which may reflect, either a shift of the importance of familial transmission of morals to other moral sources, or that females differ on the way they process and experience social learning processes, as Jennings and associates (2010) proposed.

Secondly, our results showed that witnessing moral educators can explain a moderate to small variance of traditional crime only for males in the two countries. On one hand, these results are consistent with the SLT claim that influence groups can affect deviant behavior, since the balance leans towards experience; the more individuals experience moral educators' behavior, which overcomes learned definitions according to Wikström (2020), the more criminal behavior increases. However, only witnessing parents and teachers correlates with crime. This indicates that for males, witnessing significant others has a direct impact on their criminal activity, which is in line with SLT that proposes that parents' behavior can directly influence behavior through imitation, irrespective of learning definitions (Akers, 1985; Akers et al., 1979) and previous research findings regarding parents' and school bonds with delinquency (Sabatine et al., 2017).

On the other hand, SLT would postulate that a similar crime pattern exists across gender, but only males pertain to deviant behavior when witnessing moral educators. This finding may suggest that males and females differentiate in the way they process and internalize the experience because of gender-stratified socialization; Through role-taking, gender definitions of masculinity and femininity are included in the self-image (Hay, 2003). Definitions of femininity are inconsistent with crime, include more care-giving roles and sensitivity to the notions of significant others, therefore females may be more prone to internalize the moral teachings and justify rather than imitate or adopt the behavior. Moreover, females experience more informal social control, whereas males experience more formal social control (Hagan et al, 1979), and previous research has repeatedly shown that girls experience more intense parental supervision and monitoring than boys (Svensson, 2003), which could provide an additional explanation, in the sense of restrained and controlled environments for women in childhood and adolescence, when the behaviors of moral educators are supposedly first encountered. At the same time, most females (54,3% in Sweden and 72,5% in Greece) have committed at least a crime in our study, which indicates that other factors, possibly later in adolescence or adulthood, may affect their criminal behavior.

Lastly, we found that witnessing moral educators together with morality can explain a moderate variance of traditional crime in the two countries, while gender is highly important for both countries. Above we provided evidence that witnessing moral educators can have direct impact to individual crime, but also can affect the individual's moral emotions and (partly) moral values, with different trends in gender. Our findings here provide another relationship: Witnessing moral educators can have both a direct and an indirect impact to individual crime, with morality functioning as a mediator. This idea is in line with SAT, that social relations can be the "causes of the causes" (Wikström, 2010), and

is further supported by the studies of Svensson and associates (2017, 2013), who found similar results regarding socialization agents, moral emotions and offending, with moral emotions mediating the relationship of socialization variables and offending, whereas social bonds are found to exert direct and indirect influence in the same manner.

Still, there are some differences in the two countries regarding the power that explanatory variables exert on offending, which may reflect cultural and social differences, however we cannot be certain for the reasons behind these differences, since Greece is subjected to great changes and economic hardship the last decade and that may be reflected in the individuals' morality and offending.

Limitations

The results reported in this paper should be considered in the light of some limitations. First, this study is subjected to selection bias; An online survey that is conducted through social media, cannot fully capture a representative sample of the two populations, since individuals not always have access to internet, social media or membership to groups that we succeeded to find. Two more reasons of selection bias were the language barriers and the availability of time; The English language is a second language in both countries, however only half of the Greek population has an adequate knowledge. On the other hand, the time barriers we had, in the constraints of a thesis subject, did not allow us to seek more participants, hence we were unable to reach many males in Greece and females in Sweden, which may affect the precision of the data in these sub-groups.

Although most research uses and proposes short recollection periods to decrease recollection bias, we did not follow the recommendations for two reasons: First, Covid-19 has affected the daily routines of individuals and therefore we cannot make safe and generalized conclusions for the last year and secondly, we argue that self-reporting crime is not a matter of detailed frequency; we are interested in the "give-or-take" of the act in a longer sequence of time and not the exact number of times in a short time, where other circumstantial factors may influence the behavior. Moreover, saliency increases recollection (Eisenhower et al., 1991), therefore emotionally charged experiences can be recalled easier; This reduces memory bias for witnessing direct moral educators as well, together with the fact that moral education is a continuous process that occurs in an extensive period of time, thus may not easily be forgotten.

Another limitation in our study was the conceptualization of the measurement tools of witnessing moral educators. Indirect moral educators were differently introduced from direct moral educators, in the sense of who taught the value to the individuals. While we gave an option to the participants to state if they were not taught by the direct moral educators the moral behavior, in the case of indirect moral educators we assumed that the moral behavior is already learned, by the primary and secondary education. Although it may hold true, we did not account for the possibility of the behavior as not taught. Furthermore, in the case of witnessing parents, we suspect that it was difficult for some individuals to score the items; in the pilot study, several comments mentioned that it was uncomfortable or difficult to answer them, which may affect our results. Future research should consider a more implicit measure on intimate relationships, to

avoid such issues and witnessing indirect moral educators should be re-conceptualized to properly account for the learned behavior.

Finally, cross-sectional data cannot account for causation (Wang & Cheng, 2020), therefore we can only talk about correlations in our study. Future research should address our subject using longitudinal data, as it is interesting to investigate whether these associations can indeed have causal inferences.

Despite these limitations, this research can be seen as a first step towards a better understanding of the moral aspect of social learning processes and their influences on individual morality and crime. A lack of research in our subject may be a limitation itself, however we conclude that future research can address these limitations and provide more clear and precise results on this important area.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the lack of research, our findings provide satisfactory and promising evidence on the relationship of the conflicting aspect of moral behavior and teachings with morality and offending. By integrating theoretical components of two prominent theories, SLT and SAT, we found that witnessing moral educators breaking (their) moral teaching influences morality differently for both genders and male offending in two countries, Sweden and Greece. Nonetheless, there are yet more to be found regarding the causes of offending, the role of morality, social learning processes and their interconnectivity. In future endeavors, the social learning processes and moral educators should be further investigated in more detail, in respect to gender; What is the role of differential reinforcement in this process? Who teaches values and how in each gender? Can peers, social media, religious leaders and others be considered as moral educators? Why gender differs in processing behavioral and oral moral stimulus? We hope that our study will stimulate further investigation of this subject, since it is fundamental to expand the understanding of the cultural and social learning processes that inhibit (im)moral contexts and subsequently affect morality and offending.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.1

Items of moral educators' subscales

Answering categories: No, never / Only a few times / Sometimes, yes / Many times / Yes, all the time

Have you ever witnessed your parents:

Breaking laws that they taught you not to break ?

Lying while they taught you that is bad to lie?

Fighting (physically or verbally) although they told you not to harm others?

Being disrespectful towards others whereas they taught you to respect others?

Forcing their opinion on you without explaining, while they told you that it is wrong to do it?

Have you ever witnessed your teachers:

Forcing their opinion on you without explaining, while they told you that it is wrong to do it?

Breaking laws that they taught you not to break?

Lying while they taught you that is bad to lie?

Being disrespectful towards others whereas they taught you to respect others?

Being unfair to you or other students although they taught you to be fair?

Have you ever witnessed your political representatives:

Forcing their opinion on someone without explaining, while you were taught that it is wrong to do it?

Breaking laws that they told you not to break?

Being disrespectful towards others whereas they taught you to respect others?

Dismissing their responsibilities while you were taught that everyone has to uphold their responsibilities towards the state?

Being implicated in corrupt actions although you were told to be fair to others?

Avoiding the consequences of their actions although you were taught that the law is equal for everyone?

Have you ever witnessed people on the television media:

Lying while you were taught that is bad to lie?

Being disrespectful towards others whereas you were taught to respect others?

Fighting (physically or verbally) although you were taught not to harm others?

Expressing biased views (distorted or one-sided) against certain people or groups while you were taught to be fair?

Interpreting or reporting certain news in a way as to guide the public opinion, whereas you were taught to be objective and fair?

Forcing their opinion on someone without explaining, while they told you that it is wrong to do it?

APPENDIX 1.2

Items of anticipated shame scale

Answering categories: No, not at all / Yes, a bit / Yes, very much

Would you feel ashamed if you were caught:

stealing from work and your mother or father found out?

stealing from work and your boss found out?

stealing from work and your neighbors found out?

possessing drugs and your mother or father found out?

possessing drugs and your boss found out?

possessing drugs and your neighbors found out?

APPENDIX 1.3

Items of anticipated guilt scale

Answering categories: No, not at all / Yes, a bit / Yes, very much

Would you feel guilty if you:

did something your parents (step-parents) have told you absolutely not to do?

cheated on an ability test at work?

teased another coworker so he or she started to cry?

had stolen something from work?

hit another coworker who made a rude remark to you?

broke into a store and stole something?

APPENDIX 1.4

Items of moral values scale

Answering categories: totally disagree / disagree / neither agree nor disagree / agree / totally agree

Please indicate how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements:

Rules are made to be broken

It is ok to break rules, as long as do not get caught

Fighting is ok when provoked

If honest ways to achieve something fail, then use dishonest ways

APPENDIX 2

Items of traditional crime scale

Answering categories: 0 times / 1 time / 2-3 times / 4–5 times / 6–10 times / more than 10 times

In the past five years, how often have you:

Damaged or destroyed something, for example bicycles, bus stop shelters, lampposts, or something else?

set a fire (for example in a building, house, bus or car)?

taken something from someplace worth less than $20 that does not belong to you?

broken into somewhere (for example in a house, in a shop, a school or a company)?

robbed someone?

stolen anything covertly from another person (for example, money, a mobile telephone, a bicycle, a wallet or a purse, a hand-bag, jewelry, a watch)?

threatened someone with physical violence?

beaten or punched another adult?

sold drugs such as weed or hash?

Passed a red light while driving?

Hit something accidentally with the car and left?

driven an automobile while under the influence of a moderate amount of alcohol or drugs?

failed to report a certain income or claimed an undeserved deduction on your income tax return?

Used someone you know (e.g., police officer, administration, politician) to avoid sanctions, tickets or to gain something with unconventional means?