Culture, Social Organization, and Patterns of Violence

Dov Cohen
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Traditional social theorizing holds that strong and cohesive family, community, and religious institutions rein in violence. However, in cultures where certain types of violence are condoned, this should not be true. Specifically, in the U.S. South and West, where culture-of-honor traditions persist, greater social organization should be associated with more violence. This pattern was confirmed in examinations of argument-related homicide rates (Study 1); mass consumption patterns for violence in entertainment, recreation, and vocational pursuits (Study 2); and voting patterns of political elites on gun control and national defense issues (Study 3). Across the 3 studies, social organization was associated with effects in the South and West opposite of what they were in the North. Implications for general theories of cultural evolution, suggesting a cycle in the way societies crystallize and change, are discussed.

It is a widely held belief that strong, cohesive, tightly structured families and communities keep people behaving in an appropriate manner and rein in impulses toward violence and deviance. The underlying assumption is that humans unchecked by social restraints tend toward violence, force, and selfishness and the institutions of family, community, and religion are needed to act as a curb on this. These ideas have a long history in political philosophy (Hobbes, 1651/1957), psychology (Freud, 1930/1961), anthropology (Colson, 1975), and popular thought.

In 20th-century social science, these ideas have been most developed empirically by sociologists, particularly those working in the social disorganization and anomie traditions. Organized (stable and intact) families and communities are theorized to produce controls both internal and external to people, keeping them from straying toward a normlessness that leads to crime and pathology.

However, this theorizing ignores one important consideration: Violence is not always thought of as pathological or counternormative. There are cultures in which violence is not an entirely deviant response, and in such cultures, one might expect that the stronger and tighter the social organization, the more culturally appropriate violence there will be.

In the United States, there are cultural regions where norms about appropriate forms of violence have been crystallizing since their founding in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Specifically, the South and West have developed "cultures of honor," in which insults and threats to reputation, self, home, or family are taken quite seriously and are often met with vio-

lence. This culture is supported by spoken and unspoken norms, and cohesive social organization that helps sustain these norms will also sustain this culture. Thus, in three studies I explored the hypothesis that more tightly organized communities of the South and West have more culturally appropriate honor-related violence. I also examined whether—consistent with traditional social theorizing—in a region where violence is counternormative (the North), more tightly organized communities have less violence.

Culture and Violence

Culture of Honor in the South and West

There is considerable evidence from historians, ethnographers, sociologists, and psychologists that the South and West possess a culture of honor. Where this culture came from and how it is maintained today are two important but distinct matters. The reasons that a culture of honor developed historically may be quite different from the reasons it is maintained today, and this possibility will be addressed in the Discussion. However, for the purpose of examining violence in the present-day South and West, there are several lines of evidence that point to the existence of contemporary culture-of-honor norms.

1. On surveys, southerners and westerners voice stronger support than northerners do for honor-related violence. Though they do not express greater approval than northerners do for violence in general, they are more likely to endorse violence for protecting oneself from insults and threats to self, family, or property (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994).

2. In laboratory experiments, southerners behave in accordance with a culture-of-honor stance. A southerner may act in a more polite way than a northerner does if neither is insulted. But an insult changes the situation dramatically. Northerners seem to be little affected by insult, whereas southerners who are insulted believe their masculine reputation has been damaged by the affront and respond with more emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral signs of aggression and dominance (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Cohen, Vandello, Puente, & Rantilla, 1997; Cohen, Vandello, & Rantilla, 1998).

3. Southern and western regions of the country have far higher homicide rates than do those of the North (Huff-Corzine, Corzine, & Moore, 1986, 1991; Nisbett, Polly, & Lang, 1995). Depending on the population unit examined, the differences can run as high as 4 to 1. Consistent with the notion that the culture of honor drives this effect, southern and western homicide rates are found to be elevated only for homicides committed in the context of an argument or quarrel, where reputations and threat are of great concern. The homicide rates of the South and West for killings that occur during the course of another felony (e.g., robbery or burglary) are not higher than those of the North (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996).

4. The collective representations and cultural products of the South and West indicate more favorability toward violence than do those of the North. Baron and Straus (1989) found that the South and, to a greater extent, the West scored higher on their legitimate-violence index, a measure made up of indicators such as violent television viewership, violent magazine subscription rates, hunting licenses per capita, and rates of executions.

5. The laws and social policies of the South and West are more favorable toward violence consistent with a strong ethic of self-protection and honor. Southern and western states are more likely to have looser gun control regulations, representatives who vote for more hawkish foreign policies, and self-defense laws that are more lenient in allowing people to use violence in defending themselves and their property (Cohen, 1996).

6. Finally, institutions in the South and West—such as employers and the media—are more likely to perpetuate culture-of-honor norms by reinforcing violence. In two field experiments (Cohen & Nisbett, 1997), employers of the South and West were more likely than northern employers to give warm responses to job applicants who had killed someone in a bar fight, and newspaper reporters of the South and West were more likely than their northern counterparts to treat stories of honor-related violence with sympathy and understanding for the perpetrator.

Organization and Perpetuation

Thus there is clear evidence that the culture of honor of the South and West is sustained today. Consistent with the present hypotheses, Reed (1981) suggested that if such a "culture of violence" exists in the South, one implication is that "violence will emanate from the *well*-socialized, not just from marginal folk who don't know or care what's expected of them" (p. 12). Consistent with this assertion, Ellison (1991) found that defensive or retaliatory violence seemed to be supported by the "public religious culture" of the South (p. 1231). Religious attendance was negatively correlated with approval of defensive or retaliatory violence in the general population, whereas it was positively correlated with such approval in the South (p. 1231).

Using a number of methods, I attempted to build on this work by showing that greater community and family cohesion is associated with more culturally appropriate violence in the South and West, whereas it is associated with less violence in the North:

In Study 1, I sought to show that more stable, intact communities in the South and West produce higher rates of culture-of-honor violence. The reverse was expected to be true in the

North, consistent with traditional social theorizing. Further, it was predicted that this pattern would hold only for culturally approved violence (i.e., honor-related violence). Violence that was not culturally approved of (i.e., felony-related homicide) would not be more prevalent in more organized southern and western communities relative to the North.

In Study 2, the collective representations and cultural products that Baron and Straus (1989) examined were reanalyzed. Again, I predicted that more organized southern and western states would produce more violent collective representations, whereas more organized northern states would produce less. The emphasis in Study 2 was on mass consumption patterns for violence in entertainment, recreation, and vocational pursuits.

Similar predictions were made for Study 3, in which voting patterns of political elites and laws that condone or punish violence were examined. The hypothesis was that southern and western organized states would have laws and social policies more tolerant of violence, and northern organized states would have laws that are less tolerant.

Indicators of Social Organization

A persistent weakness of the social-disorganization approach has been the lack of a consistent definition of what exactly constitutes social disorganization (Pfohl, 1985). However, ignoring moderate inconsistencies, three broad concepts seem implicated. The findings of researchers seem to be consistent with lay theories and revolve around stability of the community, stability of the family, and the restraining influence of religion.

Stability of the Community

Historians and other observers have noted how "movement, migration, and mobility"—what Pierson (1992) called the "M factor"—have brought about social and cultural change. Sociologists also consistently use community stability as an indicator of social organization and often operationalize it using measures of residential mobility (Greenberg, Carey, & Popper, 1987; Sampson, 1991; review by Baron & Straus, 1989). This makes sense, because residentially stable communities would be the ones where reputations matter most and where the community is most able to effectively transmit values and enforce norms through social reward or punishment. It has been shown empirically that residential stability promotes "social cohesion" through increasing the density of "friendship/acquaintanceship ties," enhancing "attachment to community," and decreasing "anonymity among residents" (Sampson, 1991, p. 43).

Stability of the Family

This is probably the most important factor, according to lay theories of social behavior. First, intact families are conceived of as better able than "broken homes" to communicate values to children and supervise them (Elshtain, 1996). In popular rhetoric, the American model for the ideal family is distinctly nuclear (husband, wife, and children) and not extended or differentially organized (Simpkins, 1996).

Second, marriage itself is seen as a profoundly important tool for domesticating adult men. As a way of "taming men, mar-

riage is unsurpassed. 'Of all the institutions through which men may pass—schools, factories, the military—marriage has the largest effect' Wilson [1993] writes in *The Moral Sense*" (Rauch, 1996, p. 22).[1] Simply put, marriage takes men off the streets and "keeps them at home and out of trouble" (Rauch, 1996, p. 22). Further, children are seen as a stabilizing force in men's lives, forcing on them responsibility and structure in their lives.

> Married men, as Emile Durkheim pointed out, are subject to salutary discipline. Monogamy controls and focuses their sexual energy; children make them mindful of the example they set; the material needs of their families encourage regular work habits and self-sacrifice. Above all, married men lack the sense of expendability that plagues bachelor communities, in which the prospective loss of life, whether one's own or another's, is often lightly regarded. . . . Though the purpose of marriage is family formation, one of its chief effects is male social control. The controlling effect works on two generations, fathers and sons, present and future. (Courtwright, 1996, pp. 38–41)

Thus, not only do children benefit from two-parent homes, but adult men benefit from the stability, structure, and duties involved in providing for a family. (For research on family stability, see studies reviewed by Baron & Straus, 1989; Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1990; Sampson, 1993).

Religion

Unfortunately, the effects of religion on crime and deviance have not been very clear or consistent (see studies summarized by Baron & Straus, 1989; Klein, 1997, p. 43; Sloane & Potvin, 1986). Nevertheless, religion was examined in the present research because it has a strong place in lay theories of behavior and traditional social and political theorizing (Durkheim, 1964; Freud, 1930/1961). Further, there is some evidence that the religious culture of the South may be implicated in support for violence (Ellison, 1991; see also Ellison & Sherkat, 1993).

A Note on Presentation of Results and Definitions of Regions

Presentation

For ease in understanding the data and magnitude of the raw differences, the results are initially present in the standard 2 × 2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) form. The first factor was region, the second was social disorganization, and a median split was used to divide socially disorganized communities from socially organized ones.

Results from regression analyses are also presented to show that the interactions held when other variables were controlled for. In this case, region was still a dichotomous variable (0 = North, and 1 = South and West), but I allowed social disorganization to remain a continuous variable and computed the interaction term as Region × Social Disorganization. If y is violence, the equation is thus: $y = a + b_1(\text{region}) + b_2(\text{social disorganization}) + b_3(\text{region})(\text{social disorganization})$. For a northern community (region = 0), the equation simplifies to $y = a + b_1(0) + b_2(\text{social disorganization}) + b_3(0)(\text{social disorganization})$, or $y = a + b_2(\text{social disorganization})$. For a southern or

western community (region = 1), the equation simplifies to $y = a + b_1(1) + b_2(\text{social disorganization}) + b_3(1)(\text{social disorganization})$, or $y = a + b_1 + (b_2 + b_3)(\text{social disorganization})$. Thus, b_3 is the difference in slopes in the northern versus southern and western samples. The prediction was that b_3 would be significantly negative, because social disorganization would reduce violence in the South and West, relative to what it does in the North.[2]

Definition of Regions

This paper followed census definitions of the North, South, and West, consistent with earlier work (Cohen, 1996; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994, 1997, in press; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). The South was defined as Census Divisions 5–7, excluding Washington, DC. This included Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. The West was defined as Census Divisions 8 and 9, excluding Alaska and Hawaii, which do not share the common historical heritage of the region. This included New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, California, Oregon, and Washington. All other states not in the South or West were obviously in the third category of states (i.e., those that are not southern or western). In this article, "North" is used as a shorthand way of referring to nonsouthern and nonwestern states.

Methods and Data

Relevant details about methods and data are given below. Readers are referred to other sources for more complete descriptions of procedures and for means and distributions of the variables (Baron & Straus, 1989; Cohen, 1996; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Nisbett et al., 1995). Main effects of region were the focus of these other studies but were not the focus of the present research. Nevertheless, main effects for the three studies are reported in footnotes for the sake of completeness.

Study 1: Homicide and Social Disorganization

Homicide data for the years 1980–1983 were obtained from the *FBI Supplemental Homicide Reports* (Fox & Pierce, 1987), which lists the circumstances of the crime as well as demographic information about the offender and victim. Data on social disorganization and control variables (e.g., poverty, population size, and education) were obtained from 1980 census data compiled by Adams (1992). Both sources of data are well established, relatively clean, and easy to work with and have been used previously in this line of research.

---

[1] In a recent review, Mazur and Booth (in press) argue that even men's level of testosterone (a hormone associated with aggression and dominance behavior) "is highly responsive to changes in marital status, falling with marriage and rising with divorce" (p. 14).

[2] In regressions, the social disorganization, region, and interaction variables were centered to reduce multicollinearity.

Method

Homicide Data

The FBI reports make it relatively easy to sort homicides into those that were argument or brawl related and those that were felony related.[3] Again, the expectation was that social organization in the South and West would promote only culturally appropriate (argument and brawl related) homicides, where insult or protection issues were at stake.

Only homicides committed by offenders whom police identified as non-Hispanic Whites were included. As Nisbett and colleagues have shown, Black homicide rates do not differ between the North and South, and regional effects seem to hold only for Whites, suggesting that it is something about White southern culture (rather than just living below the Mason-Dixon line) that produces the difference (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Reaves, 1997).[4]

Further, only homicides committed by men were included. Women also commit homicides, of course, but the etiology of female-perpetrated homicide is much different from that of male-perpetrated homicide. As Daly and Wilson (1988) have shown, male homicides usually occur over status or are felony related. Homicides by women overwhelmingly occur in response to repeated batterings by the men in their lives.

Finally, because the focus was specifically on culture-of-honor violence, it made sense to further refine the population under study to those who were still playing the culture-of-honor game and jockeying for position in the status hierarchy. The competition for honor, status, and marriageability is most intense in late adolescence and early adulthood, and the violence stemming from this has been dubbed by some observers to be part of the "young male syndrome" (Daly & Wilson, 1988, p. 168; M. Wilson & Daly, 1985). Thus, for the cleanest test of the hypotheses about violence arising over issues of status and honor, homicides were restricted to those committed by men between the ages of 15 and 39 (Daly & Wilson, 1988). Obviously, the end points of this range are somewhat arbitrary, but an a priori decision was made to limit analyses to the age range most relevant for the processes being examined. The generalizability of the findings is therefore limited to this age set. However, theoretically, this restriction sharpens the test, because it looks at the most relevant population, and practically, this limitation is not of great concern, because the selected age range included 78% of all known homicide offenders during the period studied (Fox & Pierce, 1987). The homicides were aggregated at the county level, and rates of homicides per 100,000 White males ages 15–39 in the population were computed.

Social Disorganization and Control Variables

With respect to independent variables, the Adams (1992) data set did not have variables corresponding to religious participation. However, it did have several variables relating to residential stability and family structure stability.

The index of residential stability was composed simply of two variables: the percentage of the county population that was living in the same house it did 5 years ago and the percentage living in the same county it did 5 years ago. The two variables were standardized and averaged together. (The correlation between the two items was .86.)

The index of family structure stability consisted of seven measures that reflected the supposed restraining influences of family, marriage, and two-parent households. These seven measures were the percentage of individuals in the county who either lived alone or lived with people unrelated to them, the percentage of households in the county that were nonfamily households, the percentage of families in the county that were headed by a woman, the percentage of families with minor children in the county that were headed by a woman, the percentage of families headed by a woman that included minor children, the percentage of families in the county headed by both a husband and wife (reverse scored), and the percentage of two-parent families in the county that

had children (reverse scored). The seven measures were standardized and averaged together. The standardized alpha coefficient for the index was .71.[5]

Control measures that were used in multiple regressions included the population size of the county (transformed using a log 10 scale to reduce skew), the percentage of the population that was Black (a frequently used control that reduces error associated with defining predictor variables over the entire population), and an index of poverty and education. The poverty index comprised four variables that were standardized and averaged together: the Gini index of income inequality, the percentage of the young adult population that had dropped out of school, the percentage of the nonelderly population that lived below the poverty line, and mean family income (reverse scored). The standardized alpha coefficient for the index was .68.

Results

Argument-Related Homicides

Residential stability. As Table 1 shows, argument-related homicides were more common in the residentially stable communities of the South and West, as compared with the residentially unstable communities of the South and West ($p < .006$ for the test of simple effects). In the North, however, homicides tended to be slightly less common in residentially stable communities as compared with their unstable counterparts (simple effects $p < .35$). The interaction was significant at the $p < .01$ level, $F(1, 3099) = 6.26$.[6]

Traditional family structure. The same patterns occurred when stability of the traditional family structure was examined (see Table 1). Argument-related homicides were more prevalent in communities of the South and West where traditional family structures were more common as compared with communities where they were less common (simple effects $p < .03$). In the North, however, homicides tended to be less prevalent in these traditional family communities (simple effects $p < .20$). The interaction was again significant at the $p < .01$ level, $F(1, 3099) = 6.10$.[7]

---

[3] Argument- or brawl-related homicides were those that the FBI reports classified as originating in lover's triangles, brawls under the influence of alcohol, brawls under the influence of narcotics, arguments over money or property, and other arguments. Felony homicides were those that the FBI reports classified as originating in rapes, robberies, burglaries, larcenies, motor vehicle thefts, arsons, prostitution and commercialized vice, other sex offenses, narcotics and drug law offenses, other felonies not specified, and suspected felonies.

[4] Results of analyses (reported in the text) that included only known non-Hispanic Whites and analyses that included all Whites (ignoring ethnicity) looked quite similar.

[5] The residential stability and traditional family structure variables were only moderately correlated ($r = .17, p < .001$, for all counties; $r = .27, p < .001$, for counties of 90% or more non-Hispanic Whites). Thus, I present analyses for these variables separately, rather than combining the two variables into an index.

[6] All probability levels reported are two-tailed.

[7] The predictions of most interest were the interactions involving region and the social disorganization variables. However, there were also some main effects to note. That is, in both the Region × Residential Stability ANOVA and the Region × Family Structure ANOVA, southern and western counties were likely to have much higher argument-related homicide rates than were northern ones, $Fs > 132.5, ps < .001$. They were also more likely to have higher felony-related homicide rates, though the differences were much less dramatic, $Fs > 38.3, p < .001$.

Table 1

Homicide Rate per 100,000 for White Males Ages 15–39 as a Function of Region and Level of Social Disorganization

	Residential stability			Family structure		
Region	More stable	Less stable	Interaction p	More traditional	Less traditional	Interaction p
			Argument-related homicides			
North						
M	4.7	6.7		4.3	7	
SD	(12.4)	(18.7)		(14.6)	(16)	
South and West			<.01			<.05
M	22.8	18.3		22.2	18.6	
SD	(52.7)	(35.6)		(48.6)	(39.3)	
			Felony-related homicides			
North						
M	2.7	2.8		2.9	2.6	
SD	(13.3)	(11.4)		(15.1)	(8.8)	
South and West			<.01			>.20
M	4.6	8.8		7	6.9	
SD	(15.4)	(20.7)		(21.8)	(15.5)	

Note. The three-way Region × Social Disorganization × Type of Homicide interaction was significant at $p < .0005$ for the analysis involving residential stability and $p < .01$ for the analysis involving family structure. Interaction p levels refer to significance levels in multiple regressions with controls.

Controlling for other variables. The above effects held when analyses controlled for other variables, such as population size, percentage of population that was Black, and poverty. The *b* value for the Residential Stability × Region interaction was 4.1, indicating that the slope of the line relating residential stability and argument-related homicides was more steeply positive in the South and West than in the North, $t(3096) = 2.49, p < .01$; $b = 4.74$ for southern and western counties and .64 for northern counties. Similarly, the *b* value for the Traditional Family Structure × Region interaction was 4.56, indicating that the slope of the line relating traditional family structure and argument-related homicides was again more steeply positive in the South and West than in the North, $t(3096) = 1.96, p < .05$; $b = 6.19$ for southern and western counties and 1.63 for northern counties.

Felony-Related Homicides

Whereas greater social organization was associated with more argument-related violence in the South and West, this was not true when felony-related violence was examined. In fact, more social organization was associated with less felony-related violence in the South and West—at least when residential stability

was examined. As may be seen in Table 1, residentially stable communities of the South and West had fewer felony-related homicides than their unstable counterparts (simple effects $p < .001$). Patterns of felony-related homicide were hardly affected by this variable in the North (simple effects $p > .90$). The interaction was significant at the $p < .001$ level, $F(1, 3099) = 11.23$. Thus, results for felony-related homicides were actually opposite of what they were for argument-related homicides. Regarding family structure, this variable had little impact in either the North or South (for the interaction of region and family structure, $F < 1, p > .85$).

Similar results were found when multiple regressions were examined. The Residential Stability × Region interaction term was significantly negative, indicating that residential stability had a more restraining influence on felony-related violence in the South and West than it did in the North, $b = -1.88, t(3096) = -2.44, p < .01$; $b = -3.07$ for southern and western counties and -1.19 for northern counties. The Family Structure × Region interaction term was not significant in multiple regressions ($t = 1.25, p > .20$).

Interaction of Region, Social Organization, and Type of Homicide

As described above, social organization tended to be associated with more argument-related homicide in the South and West but less argument-related homicide in the North. Importantly, this did not hold true for felony-related homicides. The three-way interaction between region, social disorganization, and type of homicide was significant for both the analysis involving residential stability, $F(1, 3099) = 15.32, p < .001$, and the analysis involving the presence of traditional family structures, $F(1, 3099) = 5.90, p < .02$. This remained true in

The interaction between region and homicide type was significant, *F*s $> 5.9, ps < .02$. There was also a main effect of residential stability for curbing felony-related homicides, $F(1, 3099) = 17.81, p < .001$, but not argument-related ones, $F(1, 3099) = 2.17, p > .10$. Thus, there was a significant Residential Stability × Type of Homicide interaction, $F(1, 3099) = 11.0, p < .001$. The family structure variable had no main effects for either argument-related or felony-related homicides (ps $> .20$ for both; for the interaction of family structure with type of homicide, $p > .45$).

a regression analysis with controls: $t(3096) = 3.49, p < .0005$, for the interaction involving the residential stability variable, and $t(3096) = 2.44, p < .01$, for the interaction involving the family structure variable.

Counties of 90% or More Non-Hispanic White Residents

One issue that arose was that homicide rates were defined over the White population, whereas predictor variables were defined over the entire population. In the above analyses, the problem was addressed by adding the percentage of the population that was Black as a predictor variable. Nisbett et al. (1995) have argued, however, that a more appropriate way to address this problem may be to run analyses using only the 1,901 counties that were 90% or more non-Hispanic White. The results of these analyses were very similar to those of the analyses reported above. The same three-way interactions of Region × Social Organization × Homicide Type occurred for analyses involving the residential stability variable, $F(1, 1897) = 44.13, p < .001$, and the family structure variable, $F(1, 1897) = 5.81, p < .02$. This remained true in regression analyses with control variables: $p < .0002$ for the interaction involving residential stability, and $p < .02$ for the interaction involving family structure.

Summary

In sum, social organization did have a restraining influence in the South and West, but its restraining influence was limited to violence that was not condoned by the culture of honor. That is, social organization curbed felony-related homicides. When it came to culture-of-honor violence, however, social organization had the opposite effect. Stability (both community and family) was associated with increased argument- and brawl-related homicide in the South and West, whereas it was associated with decreased argument-related homicide in the North. Violence condoned by the culture of honor seems reinforced by tight social organization in the South and West, in this case as evidenced by homicide rates. In Study 2, this proposition was extended to collective representations and consumption of more benign forms of legitimate violence.

Study 2: Mass Consumption of Legitimate Violence and Social Organization

Collective representations and aggregate behaviors should also reflect a culture's stance on the acceptability of violence. In innovative research, Baron and Straus (1989) explored this issue by looking at a number of indicators of "legitimate violence." Their classic work provided a rich data set of state-level indicators showing how often people consumed heroic or romanticized depictions of violence. ("Consumption of violence" is used here as a generic term for the participation in, purchase of, or pursuit of legitimate violent activities.) Their indicators measured how often the people of a state consumed such violence in their leisure time (examining readership of violent magazines and viewership of violent television programs), their recreation (examining hunting licenses issued per capita and per capita production of college football players),

and their professional pursuits (examining National Guard enrollments and expenditures). The emphasis in Study 2 was on mass consumption and engagement in violence, rather than on the cultural products and collective representations created by political elites, which were investigated in Study 3.

Baron and Straus's work also provided some unique state-level indicators of social disorganization that were used in the present analysis. The social disorganization and legitimate-violence measures were described extensively by Baron and Straus (1989, pp. 125–169) and are briefly summarized below.

Method

Consumption of Legitimate Violence

The index was composed of six measures standardized and averaged together (standardized $\alpha = .64$). The measures involved viewership of violent television programs (estimating the audience for the six most violent TV shows of 1980), readership of violent magazines (involving subscription rates for five violent magazines, such as *Guns and Ammo* or *Shooting Times*), National Guard enrollments and state expenditures, per capita production of National Collegiate Athletic Association college football players, and hunting licenses issued per capita (adjusted by an estimate of the percentage issued to state residents vs. nonresidents) (Baron & Straus, 1989, pp. 150–157).[8]

Social Disorganization

Baron and Straus's (1989) index of social disorganization focused on community stability, family stability, and religious participation. Spe-

---

[8] A few indicators from Baron and Straus's (1989) legitimate-violence index were not appropriate for the present analysis. Specifically, there were a number of indicators that concerned coercive or punitive violence. This sort of violence is distinct from violence produced by the culture of honor (Cohen, 1996; Cohen & Vandello, 1998; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Coercive or punitive violence seems to be a legacy of the slave system, in that violence "legitimately" used to discipline and punish slaves was also seen as legitimate in relationships of a "kindred character" (*Jacob v. State of Tennessee*, 1842, p. 519). Thus, a man could punish others who "belonged" to him, such as women and children (Frazier, 1990; Hart, 1992). In fact, empirically, it seems to be the slave South, rather than the non-slave South and the West, that scores particularly high on measures of coercive or punitive violence (Cohen, 1996; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; for further arguments, see Blumenthal, Chadiha, Cole, & Jayaratne, 1975, especially pp. 172–173; Kahan, 1996, 1997). Considerations of this type of violence are a bit tangential to the present focus on culture-of-honor violence. Nevertheless, I did examine some measures of coercive or punitive violence to determine whether social organization was associated with more approval for coercive violence in the slave South and less approval of coercive violence in other regions of the country. Results, for the most part, confirmed these predictions. Using earlier data (Cohen, 1996), I found the following: Corporal punishment was much more common in the organized slave South compared with the disorganized slave South, whereas this was not true in other regions of the United States (interaction $p < .02$ in a regression with controls). Child custody codes and mandatory arrest laws tended to be more tolerant of domestic-violence offenders in the organized slave South compared with the disorganized slave South, whereas this was again not true in other regions of the country (interaction $p < .09$ in a regression with controls; the standardized alpha for the domestic violence index was .59). However, analyses of capital-punishment laws and rates did not confirm the hypothesis (interaction $ps > .30$).

cifically, the indicators were the percentage of the population that moved from a different state or abroad between 1975 and 1980, the ratio of tourists to state residents; the percentage of divorced persons in the population, the percentage of families headed by women that included children under age 18 in 1980, the number of nonfamilied male householders per 1,000 population, and the percentage of the population with no religious affiliation. The standardized alpha for the index was .86 (see Baron & Straus, pp. 129–139 and 215–216).[9]

Control Variables

Again, a poverty index was computed for each state and used as a control in multiple regression equations. The index was again composed of four variables that were standardized and averaged together: the Gini index of income inequality, the percentage of the young adult population that had dropped out of school, the percentage of the nonelderly population that lived below the poverty line, and mean family income (reverse scored). The standardized alpha for the index was .79.

Results

As Table 2 shows, northern states that were more organized were less likely to consume violence (simple effects $p < .01$), whereas this was not true for southern and western states (simple effects $p < .70$). Consistent with predictions, the interaction was significant at the $p < .03$ level, $F(1, 46) = 4.91$.[10]

Regressions

The interaction became even stronger in multiple regressions when social disorganization was treated as a continuous variable and the socioeconomic variables in the poverty index were controlled for. The interaction term was significant at the $p < .0002$ level in a regression with controls, $t(46) = -4.10$; $b = .04$ for northern states and .00 for southern and western states. The interaction term was significant at the $p < .0001$ level in a regression without controls, $t(46) = -4.15$.

Elements of Disorganization

When the social disorganization index was broken into its component parts (community stability, family stability, and religious participation), the multiple regression results also held for

Table 2

Consumption of Violence in Recreation, Entertainment, and Vocational Activities as a Function of Region and Level of Disorganization

Region	Socially organized states	Socially disorganized states	Interaction p
North			
M	−0.39	0.31	
SD	(0.49)	(0.94)	
			<.0002
South and West			
M	0.2	0.1	
SD	(0.33)	(0.65)	

Note. Interaction p level refers to significance level in multiple regression with controls.

each of the components considered separately. In a regression equation, the interaction of region (North vs. South and West) and a three-item index of family stability (percentage of non-familied male householders, percentage of families headed by women that included children, and percentage of divorced persons; standardized alpha = .79) was significant at the $p < .0001$ level, $t(46) = -4.58$. Similarly, the interaction of region and a two-item index of residential stability (percentage of population that moved from another state and the ratio of tourists to residents; $r = .65$ between the two items) was also highly significant, $t(46) = -2.98, p < .005$. Finally, the interaction between region and percentage of the population with no religious affiliation was significant as well, $t(46) = -2.60, p < .01$. Again, the results of regression analyses that did not control for socioeconomic variables looked similar to those of regressions analyses that did.

Thus, the interactions found in Study 1 for homicide rates also held for Study 2 when engagement in more benign forms of violence was examined. In the North, tighter social organization—as reflected by family stability, community stability, and religious affiliation—seemed to decrease receptivity to legitimate violence, whereas it had no such effect in the South and the West.

Study 3: Laws, Social Policy, and Social Disorganization

Laws and social policies are important to study for two reasons. First, they are made ultimately by political elites and therefore are collective representations different from those of mass culture (Cohen, 1996; Putnam, 1993). Social policies reflect not just mass opinion, but also the influence of interest groups, the media, local political traditions, and the attitudes of the elites themselves (Nardulli, 1989; Putnam, 1993). Thus, they represent an emergent phenomenon coming from the push and pull of many different actors at both elite and mass levels (Cohen, 1996).

Second, laws and policies are important to study because they are very public representations of what a society values, what it finds just, what it finds right, and what it finds wrong and worthy of punishment (Kahan, 1996, 1997; Lessig, 1995; Will, 1983). As such, laws and policies represent something different from private patterns of violence consumption or aggressive behavior. They serve as public declarations and are a semiofficial sanctioning of an ideology or set of values (see also Cohen & Nisbett, 1997; Cohen & Vandello, 1998; Vandello & Cohen, 1998).

In study 3, I examined three issues relevant to culture-of-honor concerns: gun control, self-defense law, and national defense. On all three issues, consistent with a strong ethic of self-protection, southern and western legislators and laws have been

---

[9] Though one might hypothesize that social disorganization would be confounded with how rural or urban a state is, Baron and Straus (1989, pp. 51–53 and 199) found no significant correlation between their social disorganization index and the percentage of the population living in standard metropolitan sampling areas ($r = -.09$).

[10] Neither the main effect for region nor the main effect for social disorganization was significant in the ANOVA (both ps > .15).

shown to be more permissive with respect to violence compared with their northern counterparts (Cohen, 1996). In the present analyses, I expected southern and western states that were more socially organized to show more of this permissiveness and northern states that were more socially organized to show less of this permissiveness.

Method

Data on state-level laws and policy were obtained using indicators from earlier studies (Cohen, 1996).

Gun Control

Two indices were computed. One indicated how legislators from a state voted on gun control issues before the U.S. Congress, and the other indicated how strict gun control laws were within a given state.

The federal index was computed for each state based on how U.S. senators and representatives from that state voted on what Handgun Control Incorporated (HCI) identified as key gun control issues in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A score was first generated for each legislator based on his or her voting (standardized alpha = .96 for representatives and .94 for senators). A score of 1.0 indicated that a legislator voted with the HCI position on all issues; a score of 0 indicated that he or she voted against it on all issues. These scores were aggregated at the state level, and then a state's aggregated score from the House was averaged with its aggregated score from the Senate. (The correlation between the states' aggregated House scores and their aggregated Senate scores was .73.)

A law index was also computed for each state, indicating the extent to which its laws regulated handguns as described by the National Rifle Association's (1992) *Compendium of State Laws Governing Handguns* (e.g., did the state require a waiting period?). The standardized alpha for this index was .72. Higher scores on the state law index meant more support for gun control, with 1.0 indicating the strictest possible regulation and 0 indicating the loosest.

National Defense

An index of support for national defense was computed based on how a state's senators and representatives voted on issues before Congress in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A score was first generated for each legislator based on three measures: an index of key national defense votes (e.g., support of the Gulf War) during 1989–1991, a rating of foreign policy conservatism by the *National Journal,* and a rating on the National Security Index of the American Security Council (Barone & Ujifusa, 1991; Cohen, 1996). The standardized alpha for these three measures was .97 for senators and .98 for representatives. These scores were then aggregated at the state level, and a state's aggregated score from the House was averaged with its aggregated score from the Senate. (The correlation between the states' aggregated House scores and their aggregated Senate scores was .54.)

Self-Defense Laws

An indicator of permissiveness was obtained by standardizing and averaging six items relevant to defense of self, home, and property (e.g., whether retreat is required before using deadly force; Cohen, 1996). Higher numbers indicated a greater tolerance for violence. The standardized alpha for the index was .68.

Social Disorganization and Control Variables

State-level indicators of social disorganization were again taken from Baron and Straus (1989). Also I controlled for poverty and education using the four-item index described in Study 2.

Results

Gun Control

The predicted Region × Social Organization interaction occurred for voting at the federal level. As Table 3 shows, senators and representatives from the South and West were more likely to vote against handgun control if they were from socially organized states than if they came from disorganized ones (simple effects $p < .06$). The reverse tended to be true in the North. Northern senators and representatives were somewhat more likely to vote for gun control measures if they were from socially organized states and somewhat less likely to if they came from socially disorganized ones (simple effects $p < .15$). The interaction was significant in the ANOVA analysis, $F(1, 46) = 6.01$, $p < .02$, and in the regression analysis that controlled for the four-item poverty and education index, $t(45) = 2.12$, $p < .04$ (regression $b = -.01$, for northern states and .00 for southern and western states).

Table 3

Laws and Social Policies Relating to Violence as a Function of Region and Level of Social Disorganization

Region	Socially organized states	Socially disorganized states	Interaction p
Pro-gun-control voting in U.S. Congress			
North			
M	.57	.39	
SD	(.31)	(.29)	
			<.04
South and West			
M	.16	.37	
SD	(.13)	(.29)	
Strictness of state gun control laws			
North			
M	.43	.21	
SD	(.24)	(.26)	
			<.08
South and West			
M	.12	.11	
SD	(.16)	(.19)	
National defense hawkishness			
North			
M	-.38	.13	
SD	(.46)	(.77)	
			<.05
South and West			
M	.28	.17	
SD	(.53)	(.56)	
Self-defense law permissiveness			
North			
M	-.41	-.52	
SD	(.78)	(.95)	
			>.70
South and West			
M	.46	.33	
SD	(.57)	(.76)	

Note. Interaction p levels refer to significance levels in multiple regressions with controls.

In the analysis of state gun control laws, the pattern was similar to, though not an exact replication of, the results above (see Table 3). Organized northern states were more likely to have stricter gun control rules compared with disorganized northern states (simple effects $p < .02$), whereas there was little difference between southern and western organized and disorganized states (simple effects $p > .90$). For the Region × Social Organization interaction, $F(1, 46) = 2.94$, $p < .09$, in the ANOVA analysis and $t(45) = 1.78$, $p < .08$, in the regression analysis that controlled for the poverty and education index (regression $b = -.01$ for northern states and .00 for southern and western states).

National Defense

As may be seen in Table 3, senators and representatives from disorganized states in the North were more hawkish than those from northern organized states (simple effects $p < .05$), whereas this did not hold in the South and the West (simple effects $p > .60$). For the interaction of Region × Social Organization, $F(1, 46) = 3.45$, $p < .07$, in an ANOVA, and $t(45) = -2.03$, $p < .05$, in a regression that controlled for the poverty and education index (regression $b = .02$ for northern states and .00 for southern and western states).

Self-Defense

There was no interaction between region and social organization on the measure of defense of self and property (see Table 3): in an ANOVA, $F < 1$, $p > .95$; regression $p > .70$ for both equations that did and did not control for the poverty index.[11]

Summary

Results for two of the three areas of law supported the predictions. Northern states that were more socially organized tended to have lawmakers and laws that were stricter with regard to gun control, whereas there was no such effect or a tendency toward a reversal in the South and West. The same was true with respect to national defense: Organized northern states had less hawkish legislators than did disorganized northern states, whereas this did not hold at all in the South and West. With respect to self-defense law, the predicted interaction did not occur. Perhaps this is because self-defense law is the most obscure of the three areas above and therefore receives the least amount of attention, public scrutiny, or debate (Brown, 1979; Cohen, 1996; Nolan & Henry, 1988; Oleson & Darley, 1993; Prosser, Wade, & Schwartz, 1982). Gun control and national defense are far more salient issues and thus may be more sensitive indicators of the prevailing political culture.

Discussion

Across three studies using different methodologies, the results were very similar: Tighter, more stable, and more cohesive social organization was associated with relatively more violence in the South and West, whereas it was associated with relatively less violence in the North. Importantly, this pattern held only for types of violence seen as legitimate by the cultures of the region, not for all sorts of violence.

In Study 1, more social organization in terms of residential and family stability was associated with less argument-related homicide in the North, whereas it was associated with *more* such violence in the South and West. This pattern did not hold for felony-related homicide, which is not condoned in the southern and western culture of honor.

In Study 2, more social organization in the North in terms of residential, religious, and family stability was associated with less mass consumption of legitimate violence, whereas this was not true in the South and West. In Study 3, similar patterns emerged for laws and for social policy. In the North, more organization was associated with less violent policies with respect to gun control and national defense, whereas the reverse tended to be true in the South and West. Thus, the same patterns held for homicide rates, private patterns of more benign violence consumption, and very public representations and social policies concerning issues related to violence.

These findings fit well with other facts known about violence and the South. For example, Nisbett, Reaves, and colleagues have shown that North–South differences in homicide rates are far greater in smaller cities and in rural counties than they are in large metropolitan areas. Perhaps this is because smaller cities and rural areas tend to be more stable, more cohesive, and less subject to the disorganizing and reorganizing forces of urbanization (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Reaves, 1997). Big cities share certain commonalities across the world, and forces at work in urban areas can disrupt and change cultural patterns still well preserved in stable and cohesive rural areas.

The Paradox of Social Organization

There is one big puzzle in the present account of the way culture and social organization interact to produce patterns of violence: it is a theoretical puzzle about the origins versus the persistence of the culture of honor in the South and West.

Origins of the Culture of Honor

There have been many theories about why the South and West have been and continue to be the most violent regions of the country. Researchers have, for example, emphasized the role of slavery or the influence of hot temperatures, and there is solid evidence that these propositions must be part of the account (Anderson, 1989; Cohen, 1996; Cohen & Vandello, 1998; Wyatt-Brown, 1982). However, for reasons extensively described elsewhere, the explanation we have found most compelling is that a culture of honor developed in the South and West out of

---

[11] In terms of main effects in the ANOVAs, southern and western regions were more likely than northern ones to have senators and representatives who opposed gun control, $F(1, 46) = 7.51$, $p < .01$, and supported a strong national defense, $F(1, 46) = 4.88$, $p < .03$. They were also likely to have state laws that were more permissive in regulating handguns, $F(1, 46) = 11.54$, $p < .001$, and that allowed greater violence in defense of self and property, $F(1, 46) = 14.59$, $p < .001$. The only main effect of social disorganization was that socially disorganized states were somewhat more likely to have looser gun control laws, $F(1, 46) = 2.90$, $p < .10$. All other social disorganization main effects were not significant ($ps > .30$).

the early historical and economic circumstances of the frontier (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996).

Thus, following the lead of historians, sociologists, and ethnographers, we have argued that the culture of honor of the South arose, in part, out of the frontier conditions that pervaded the region (see Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Without effective law enforcement and without the stabilizing forces of social order in the South and West, men had to rely on themselves for protection and let it be known that they were not to be trifled with. Thus, the importance of honor and the legitimization of violence in response to provocations great and small emerged. As the historian David Fischer (1989) wrote about the backcountry South.

> In the absence of any strong sense of order as unity, hierarchy, or social peace, backsettlers shared an idea of order as a system of retributive justice. The prevailing principle was lex talionis, the rule of retaliation. It held that a good man must seek to do right in the world, but when wrong was done to him he must punish the wrongdoer himself by an act of retribution that restored order and justice in the world. (p. 765)

Others have written about the instability of family life and the anomic, rootless conditions on the frontier that gave rise to violence (e.g., Courtwright, 1996; Frantz, 1969; Gastil, 1971; Lee, 1995). Thus, it was a *lack* of social organization, in part, that produced the culture of honor in the frontier South and West.

Today, the reverse is true—strong, cohesive social organization keeps the culture of honor alive in these regions. The question is, how can both the presence of social organization and its absence give rise to the same effect, that is, more violence?

To answer this, one needs to go back to the old conceptions of social disorganization theory. Thomas and Znaniecki (1920) argued that social change proceeds through various predictable stages (see also Baron & Straus, 1989; Pfohl, 1985). First, a stable social order is disrupted when old patterns and ways of doing things become no longer functional. A period of social disorganization ensues when the old structures and cultural patterns give way. New structures and patterns eventually come into place, and society is then *reorganized* in accordance with these new principles. Eventually, these structures and patterns will also become dysfunctional, and the process will begin again. Thus, social change follows a constant cycle from organization to social disorganization to a new form of organization, which eventually gives way when the process starts anew.

The explanation is the same here. The forces of social disorganization and anomie on the southern and western frontiers gave rise to a culture of honor. Values respecting strength, masculine toughness, and violence in response to provocations were functional then if a man was to protect himself, his family, his possessions, or his livelihood. This hypermasculine stance became part of the accepted way to the extent that at some time, southern and western culture *crystallized* at the culture-of-honor point, and it became the established social form. Families, communities, religious institutions, and other socializing agents perpetuated these values and carried the culture forward.

Ultimately, the material and economic circumstances of the frontier changed, and more effective law enforcement and social stability emerged. However, culture persists past material changes, and as long as the old southern and western culture is kept in place by its stabilizing forces, it can continue: If socializing institutions like family, community, and religion that have crystallized around culture-of-honor patterns stay cohesive, stable, and solid, traditional notions about honor and violence can remain. When these institutions are disrupted and disorganized, new values and cultural patterns may emerge.

Baron and Straus (1989, pp. 176 and 187) made a similar point about organization and social change when they showed that the status of women in the United States was actually highest in states with the most disorganization (i.e. those where patriarchal patterns were most disrupted). Pettigrew (1959) followed a similar argument when he showed that Whites who were more marginalized in the South were less prejudiced than their more mainstream counterparts. Thus, in the work of Baron and Straus, Pettigrew, and in this article, it is the forces of social disorganization that disrupt old patterns and create a space for change.

A Longitudinal Test

To test the hypotheses above with respect to violence and cultural evolution, researchers need longitudinal data on homicide rates, indicators of cultural approval of violence, and levels of social disorganization. If the hypotheses are true, one might expect to find that (a) in the original stages, more disorganization is associated with more violence (thus, the frontier gives rise to acts of lawlessness and aggression); (b) if this violence rate becomes sufficiently high and other conditions are right, then a culture of honor develops in which violence and masculine strength are valued; and (c) after this culture of honor has crystallized, more social organization gives rise to more culturally condoned violence. Historians, sociologists, and anthropologists have argued for the first two stages (e.g., Brown, 1979; Fischer, 1989; Pitt-Rivers, 1968), and the present research makes the case for the third. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to verify the entire pattern using a longitudinal data set with indicators for social organization, cultural approval of violence, and homicide or violence rates.

Such speculation is somewhat afield of the present focus. Yet it is important because it points again to the profoundly important larger forces that shape us. Psychologists, political scientists, sociologists, and scholars from diverse fields are turning their attention increasingly to the issue of culture. And in this paper, it was argued that understanding culture—and understanding the way culture interacts with social structure and organization—is essential to understanding violence. The idea, popular in Western thought, that people unchecked by society are innately selfish, mean, and aggressive beings who must be reined in and controlled by larger social forces is too simple. It misses the way culture can either promote or reduce certain types of aggression and it misses the crucial mediating role that family, community, and religion play in carrying a culture forward. In examining complex phenomena, researchers need to understand the ways in which larger forces such as culture, social organization, and social disorganization interact as they shape, sustain, and allow for change in our social behaviors and our selves.

References

Adams, T. K. (1992). *Census of population and housing, 1980 [United States]: Extract data* [computer file]. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Anderson, C. A. (1989). Temperature and aggression: Ubiquitous effects of heat on human violence. *Psychological Bulletin, 106*, 74–96.

Baron, L., & Straus, M. A. (1989). *Four theories of rape in American society.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Barone, M., & Ujifusa, G. (1991). *The almanac of American politics 1992.* Washington, DC: National Journal.

Blumenthal, M. D., Chadiha, L. B., Cole, G. A., & Jayaratne, T. E. (1975). *More about justifying violence.* Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.

Brown, R. M. (1979). Southern violence. *Vanderbilt Law Review, 32*, 225–250.

Cohen, D. (1996). Law, social policy, and violence: The impact of regional cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 961–978.

Cohen, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1994). Self-protection and the culture of honor: Explaining southern homicide. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20*, 551–567.

Cohen, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1997). Field experiments examining the culture of honor: The role of institutions in perpetuating norms about violence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23*, 1188–1199.

Cohen, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (in press). Are there fatalism differences between rural southerners and midwesterners? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology.*

Cohen, D., Nisbett, R. E., Bowdle, B. F., & Schwarz, N. (1996). Insult, aggression, and the southern culture of honor: An "experimental ethnography." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 945–960.

Cohen, D., & Vandello, J. (1998). Meanings of violence. *Journal of Legal Studies, 27*, 501–518.

Cohen, D., Vandello, J., Puente, S., & Rantilla, A. (1997). *Interaction styles that perpetuate violence: How norms for politeness and aggression work together in the U.S. South.* Unpublished manuscript, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Cohen, D., Vandello, J., & Rantilla, A. (1998). The sacred and the social: Cultures of honor and violence. In P. Gilbert & B. Andrews (Eds.), *Shame: Interpersonal behavior, psychopathology, and culture* (pp. 261–282). Cambridge, England: Oxford University Press.

Colson, E. (1975). *Tradition and contract.* Chicago: Aldine.

Courtwright, D. (1996). *Violent land.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Daly, M., & Wilson, M. (1988). *Homicide.* New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Durkheim, E. (1964). *Suicide.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Ellison, C. G. (1991). An eye for an eye? A note on the southern subculture of violence thesis. *Social Forces, 69*, 1223–1239.

Ellison, C. G., & Sherkat, D. E. (1993). Conservative protestantism and support for corporal punishment. *American Sociological Review, 58*, 131–144.

Elshtain, J. (1996, October 21). The lost children. *New Republic*, pp. 30–36.

Fischer, D. H. (1989). *Albion's seed.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Fox, J. A., & Pierce, G. L. (1987). *United States supplementary homicide reports, 1976–1983.* Boston: Northeastern University, Center for Applied Social Research.

Frantz, J. B. (1969). The frontier tradition: An invitation to violence. In H. D. Graham & T. R. Gurr (Eds.), *The history of violence in America* (pp. 127–154). New York: Bantam.

Frazier, H. C. (1990). Corporal and capital punishment of juveniles. *International Journal of Medicine and Law, 9*, 996–1004.

Freud, S. (1961). *Civilization and its discontents* (J. Strachey, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton. (Original work published 1930)

Gastil, R. (1971). Homicide and a regional culture of violence. *American Sociological Review, 36*, 412–427.

Greenberg, M. R., Carey, G. W., & Popper, F. J. (1987). Violent death, violent states, and American youth. *The Public Interest, 87*, 38–48.

Hart, B. (1992). *State codes on domestic violence.* Reno, NV: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Hobbes, T. (1957). *Leviathan* (M. Oakeshott, Ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1651)

Huff-Corzine, L., Corzine, J., & Moore, D. C. (1986). Southern exposure: Deciphering the South's influence on homicide rates. *Social Forces, 64*, 906–924.

Huff-Corzine, L., Corzine, J., & Moore, D. C. (1991). Deadly connections: Culture, poverty, and the direction of lethal violence. *Social Forces, 69*, 715–732.

Jacob v. State of Tennessee (1842) 372 Tenn. 3 (1878).

Kahan, D. (1996). What do alternative sanctions mean? *University of Chicago Law Review, 63*, 591–653.

Kahan, D. (1997). Social influence, social meaning, and deterrence. *Virginia Law Review, 83*, 349–393.

Klein, J. (1997, June 16). In God they trust. *New Yorker*, pp. 40–48.

Land, K. C., McCall, P. L., & Cohen, L. E. (1990). Structural covariates of homicide rates: Are there any invariances across time and social space? *American Journal of Sociology, 95*, 922–963.

Lee, R. (1995). Machismo values and violence in America: An empirical study. In L. Adler & F. Denmark (Eds.), *Violence and the prevention of violence* (pp. 11–31). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Lessig, L. (1995). The regulation of social meaning. *University of Chicago Law Review, 62*, 943–1045.

Mazur, A., & Booth, A. (in press). Testosterone and dominance in men. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences.*

Nardulli, P. (Ed.). (1989). *Diversity, conflict, and state politics.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

National Rifle Association. (1992). *Compendium of state laws governing handguns.* Washington, DC: Author.

Nisbett, R. E., & Cohen, D. (1996). *Culture of honor.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Nisbett, R. E., Polly, G., & Lang, S. (1995). Homicide and regional U.S. culture. In R. B. Ruback & N. A. Weiner (Eds.), *Interpersonal violent behaviors* (pp. 135–151). New York: Springer.

Nolan, J. R., & Henry, B. R. (1988). *Massachusetts practice: Vol. 32. Criminal law* (2nd ed.). St. Paul, MN: West.

Oleson, K. C., & Darley, J. M. (1993, May). *Diverging perceptions of excessive counter-aggressive force: The community versus the legal code.* Poster presented at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Society, Chicago.

Pettigrew, T. (1959). Regional differences in anti-Negro prejudice. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 59*, 28–36.

Pfohl, S. J. (1985). *Images of deviance and social control.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pierson, G. W. (1992). The M factor. In R. Wilkinson (Ed.), *American social character: Modern interpretations* (pp. 180–200). New York: HarperCollins.

Pitt-Rivers, J. (1968). Honor. In D. Sills (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social sciences* (pp. 503–511). New York: Macmillan.

Prosser, W. L., Wade, J. W., & Schwartz, V. E. (1982). *Cases and materials on torts.* Mineola, NY: Foundation Press.

Putnam, R. (1993). *Making democracy work.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rauch, J. (1996, May 6). For better or worse. *New Republic*, pp. 18–23.

Reaves, A. L. (1997). *The cultural ecology of rural White homicide in the southern United States*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

Reed, J. S. (1981). Below the Smith and Wesson line: Reflections on southern violence. In M. Black & J. S. Reed (Eds.), *Perspectives on the American South* (pp. 9–22). New York: Cordon & Breach.

Sampson, R. J. (1991). Linking the micro- and macrolevel dimensions of community social organization. *Social Forces, 70*, 43–64.

Sampson, R. J. (1993). Family and community-level influences on crime: A contextual theory and strategies for research testing. In D. P. Farrington, R. J. Sampson, & P. H. Wikstrom (Eds.), *Integrating individual and ecological aspects of crime* (pp. 152–168). Stockholm, Sweden: National Council for Crime Prevention.

Simpkins, J. (1996, July 1). All in the family. *New Republic*, p. 27.

Sloane, D. M., & Potvin, R. H. (1986). Religion and delinquency: Cutting through the maze. *Social Forces, 65*, 87–104.

Thomas, W. I., & Znaniecki, F. (1920). *The Polish peasant in Europe and America*. Boston: Gorham Press.

Vandello, J., & Cohen, D. (1998). *Endorsing, enforcing, or distorting? How southern norms about violence are perpetuated*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Will, G. F. (1983). *Statecraft as soulcraft: What government does*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Wilson, J. Q. (1993). *The moral sense*. New York: Free Press.

Wilson, M., & Daly, M. (1985). Competitiveness, risk taking, and violence: The young male syndrome. *Ethology and Sociobiology, 6*, 59–73.

Wyatt-Brown, B. (1982). *Southern honor: Ethics and behavior in the Old South*. New York: Oxford University Press.