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## **The connection between mate competition, status competition and resource defense and their impact on cases of murder-suicide**

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**“The connection between  
mate competition, status competition and resource defense  
and their impact on cases of murder-suicide”**

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## **Abstract**

Using a dataset from the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF), this thesis uses Quantitative Content Analysis to explore murder-suicide cases across cultures. The collection contains 36 texts from various cultures, including Akan, Blackfoot, Iroquois, Tiv, and Tlingit, which were coded using binary indicators (0 for "No" and 1 for "Yes") for psychological, social, economic, and geographic elements. These aspects are divided into three categories: mate competition, status competition, and resource defense.

In mate competition, jealousy, obsessive attachment, and perceived infidelity all cause aggression, with obsessive attachment playing an important part in intimate relationships, as demonstrated in the Tiv culture.

Status competition is driven by the need to maintain or improve social status and reputation, with loss of control, reputational threat, and humiliation being major contributors. Loss of control was uniformly significant, presenting favorably in all 36 cases, emphasizing its function in motivating aggressive behavior across cultures.

Economic strain, property disputes, territoriality, and resource access all have an impact on resource defense efforts. These characteristics, while less common, were critical in situations of intense economic and territorial tensions. Examples from the Iroquois and Blackfoot societies show how resource competition for hunting grounds and food supplies leads to war.

This thesis acknowledges its limitations, such as the small sample size and binary coding, which may oversimplify actions. Future study should capture cultural complexities with greater datasets and more nuanced coding systems. Despite these limitations, the study advances our understanding of the psychological, social, and economic elements that drive aggression leading to murder-suicide, paving the way for future research and policy development.

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## Chapter 1, Introduction

This paper examines the roles of mate competition, status competition, and resource defense in murder-suicide instances from many academic perspectives, providing a thorough understanding of these events. Evolutionary psychology implies that behaviors motivated by mate competition and reproductive possibilities can lead to extreme reactions such as murder-suicide in the face of perceived threat or loss. Criminology investigates the motivations and triggers for violent crimes, including power dynamics, social position, and resource access. Sociology focuses on the societal norms, cultural expectations, and structural imbalances that influence how people respond to threats to their relationships, status, or material wellbeing.

Within this paradigm, the research question "*To what extent are mate competition, status competition, and resource defense implicated in murder-suicide?*" emerges as the primary inquiry driving interdisciplinary inquiries into the phenomenon. This research seeks to understand the interplay of human motivations, social dynamics, and environmental impacts by investigating murder-suicide cases. Evolutionary psychologists investigate how mate competition, which is motivated by evolutionary imperatives for reproductive success, can escalate into violence when reproductive possibilities or social standing are endangered. Criminologists study patterns of violence within the larger context of criminal behavior, looking at how conflicts over resources or perceived injustices can lead to extreme acts of aggression and self-harm.

Mate rivalry causes behaviors like jealousy and mate-guarding, which can lead to violence as people try to acquire control of their romantic or sexual relationships or exact revenge on perceived rivals (Buss, 2005). Status competition influences social hierarchies, self-esteem, and access to resources. Criminological approaches emphasize the role of status disputes in fostering violent behavior, particularly in environments where social status and respect are strongly valued. Disagreements about perceived loss of status, respect, or social

standing in murder-suicide cases can escalate into violent confrontations as individuals attempt to regain or maintain their position within social hierarchies (Fox & Levin, 1998). Resource defense refers to the battle for scarce resources such as money, power, or territory, which drives conflict and aggression in human society. Criminological theories, such as resource-based theories of crime, highlight the role of resource disputes in motivating criminal behavior, including acts of violence and self-harm. Disagreements over resource access or territory control may act as a stimulus for extreme behavior in murder-suicide cases, particularly in conditions of socioeconomic imbalance or perceived injustice (Wilson & Daly, 1997).

This research promotes cross-disciplinary collaboration by bringing together experts from psychology, sociology, biology, and criminal justice to broaden academic discourse and knowledge of complex social phenomena. Interdisciplinary techniques are critical for resolving issues such as murder-suicide, which necessitate insights from different fields to grasp the underlying causes. The research has practical implications for murder-suicide prevention, intervention, and support programs. By identifying fundamental causes and triggers, researchers can create tailored therapies to minimize risk and prevent recurrence, such as enhancing relationship dynamics and conflict resolution skills to reduce violence.

Furthermore, knowing the connection between status rivalry, resource defense, and murder-suicide might assist policymakers and practitioners in addressing social inequities and structural variables that lead to violence and aggression. Policies aiming at closing socioeconomic gaps and increasing resource availability may help diminish perceived grievances and injustices, which can fuel violent behavior (Salvatore, 2022). Furthermore, efforts to challenge harmful gender norms and promote gender parity may help to reduce the impact of toxic masculinity and patriarchal power dynamics, both of which contribute to intimate partner violence.

The coded data from the Human Relations Area Files, which includes civilizations such as the Akan, Blackfoot, Iroquois, Tiv, and Tlingit, yields substantial results. Psychological and social issues such as control, shame, and perceived injustice emerge as major sources of violence. Loss of control is universally significant, occurring in all 36 cases, validating notions of violence and frustration (Dollard et al., 1939). Humiliation, especially in the Akan and Tlingit cultures, is a powerful motivator that frequently results in retaliatory measures to restore self-esteem and social standing (Gilligan, 2003). Threats to reputation and social standing are especially important in hierarchical societies like the Tlingit and Iroquois, where protecting social rank may lead to aggressive conduct (Ellemers, 2012).

Although economic challenges such as strain and property conflicts are uncommon, their presence reveals underlying social and economic imbalances that might worsen other stressors (Agnew, 2001). The few but significant examples of territoriality and resource access demonstrate the importance of resource rivalry in specific settings (Hobfoll, 1989). These findings highlight the intricate interplay of psychological, social, and economic elements that drive aggressive behavior across cultures, offering implications for future research and practical solutions.

This research is structured into chapters to provide a full understanding of the components that contribute to murder-suicide. Chapter 2, examines existing studies and theories on mate rivalry, status competition, and resource defense, laying the groundwork for future research. Chapter 3, describes the qualitative comparative analysis method, data sources from the Human Relations Area Files, and the coding procedure for analyzing psychological, social and economic elements. Chapter 4, highlights the research's findings, highlighting important triggers of murder-suicide cases across cultures and circumstances. Finally, chapter 5, summarizes the research findings, evaluates limitations, and makes recommendations for future research and practical applications in violence prevention and intervention.

## **Chapter 2, Literature review & Theoretical Framework**

Murder-suicide episodes are an extreme form of interpersonal violence, with serious implications for both individuals and society. Understanding the underlying causes of such incidents is critical for designing effective preventative and intervention plans. Interdisciplinary research has shed light on various reasons that contribute to violent behavior, including mate rivalry, status competition, and resource defense.

Evolutionary psychology sheds light on the role of mate rivalry in motivating aggressive behaviors and growing disputes, which can eventually lead to events like murder-suicide instances. According to Buss (2005), mate competition is a fundamental element of human behavior that originated in our evolutionary history, in which individuals struggle for reproductive opportunities in order to optimize their fitness. This competition can exacerbate feelings of jealousy and insecurity, especially in love relationships, resulting in mate guarding actions designed to keep rivals from interfering with one's reproductive success. Murder-suicides frequently involve intimate partner relationships, and beliefs of mate competition can play a key role in inciting violent behavior. Semenyna et al. (2020) demonstrate how jealousy and mate-guarding behaviors can exacerbate conflicts between romantic partners, particularly when individuals perceive dangers to their relationship or reproductive prospects. In extreme instances, people may resort to fatal violence to eliminate perceived rivals or gain control over their spouses. Furthermore, research on the Dark Triad traits (Semenyna et al., 2019) indicates that individuals with high levels of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy may be more likely to use manipulative and aggressive tactics in mate competition, increasing the likelihood of violent outcomes such as murder-suicide.

The link between mate rivalry and murder-suicide highlights the importance of understanding the evolutionary underpinnings of human behavior and how it affects interpersonal conflicts. Individuals in mating circumstances may regard threats to their

reproductive success as existential concerns, resulting in powerful emotional responses and aggressive behavior. These actions can be amplified by personality factors linked to manipulative and antisocial behavior, resulting in increased conflict escalation and violent results. Recognizing the role of mate competition in driving interpersonal violence allows researchers and practitioners to develop targeted interventions that address underlying relationship dynamics and promote healthy conflict resolution strategies, thereby preventing tragic incidents like murder-suicide.

Status competition, motivated by a desire for social recognition and power, is a major component in murder-suicide events. Individuals frequently attempt to assert their rank and maintain their position within social hierarchies, resulting in conflicts and confrontations that can escalate to extreme degrees of violence.

Buss's (2021) research stresses the role of status disputes in inciting violent behavior. In competitive contexts where status is highly valued, people may feel motivated to defend their social standing and retaliate against perceived challenges to their power. Disputes over status, respect, or social hierarchies can cause great emotional distress, driving resentment and aggressiveness toward rivals. Furthermore, White et al. (2013) discovered that competing for status might alter people's attitudes on economic redistribution, showing that status rivalry has larger societal implications. Individuals who want to retain or improve their position may reject laws or activities that threaten their social standing, contributing to social tensions and conflicts. Additionally, Wei et al. (2017) explore how home ownership is used as a sort of status rivalry, with people attempting to purchase property to express their social status and success. Competition for resources like housing has the potential to deepen social disparities and ignite disputes over wealth and privilege. Van Leeuwen et al. (2020) discovered that struggle for status within social networks produced "superstars" with disproportionate impact and power. This unequal distribution of status and wealth within networks can intensify social

tensions and heighten the possibility of conflict, including violent confrontations. Furthermore, Antinyan et al. (2019) investigate the impact of income inequality on status rivalry in emerging social networks, emphasizing how wealth and resource differences can exacerbate competition and lead to social instability. Individuals may engage in aggressive activities, including violence, to assert their status and secure their position in the social hierarchy.

In cases of murder-suicide, status issues within intimate partner relationships can play a key role in the escalation of violence. Perceptions of status loss or threats to social standing can elicit strong emotional responses, prompting people to take drastic measures to maintain control or exact revenge on perceived rivals. The drive to maintain dominance and protect one's reputation in social circles can exacerbate confrontations, leading individuals to engage in aggressive behavior with disastrous consequences.

Resource defense, or the act of guarding or acquiring valuable resources such as money, power, and territory, plays a major role in murder-suicide cases. Individuals may see threats to their access or control over resources as existential problems, resulting in conflicts and confrontations that can escalate to extreme levels of violence.

Chagnon et al. (2017) found that resource defense can lead to interpersonal disputes, including violence inside communities. Cross-cousin marriage traditions, motivated by concerns over resource transmission and control, can result in parent-child conflict and mate competition among brothers, emphasizing the role of resources in shaping social dynamics and behaviors. Fisher (2014) addresses the importance of resources in women's competitiveness and collaboration, focusing on how access to resources affects reproductive success and social standing. Individuals in competitive contexts may engage in aggressive behaviors, including violence, in order to get or keep access to resources critical for survival and reproductive success. Buss (2021) delves into resource-based crime theories, emphasizing how disagreements over access to resources or control over territory can act as catalysts for violent

conduct. Perceptions of resource scarcity or inequality can heighten social tensions and fuel disputes, raising the risk of violent consequences like murder-suicide. Fisher et al. (2013) discovered that competing for resources influences men's opinions toward economic redistribution, highlighting the broader societal consequences of resource rivalry. Individuals may resist programs or efforts that have the potential to redistribute resources because they fear losing status or access to important resources.

White et al. (2013) discovered that competition for resources might influence people's attitudes toward economic redistribution, with those contending for resources rejecting measures that could jeopardize their access to wealth and power. Wei et al. (2017) examine how home ownership functions as a type of resource defense, with people attempting to buy property in order to secure their money and social position. Competition for resources like housing can deepen social inequality and spark conflict over access to prized items. Hall et al. (2017) investigate the link between personality, plasticity, and resource defense, emphasizing how individual differences in resource defense methods might affect social interactions and conflict resolution tactics. Individuals may engage in aggressive actions, including violence, to defend their access to resources or assert their power within social groupings.

In cases of murder-suicide, conflicts over resources within intimate partner relationships can contribute significantly to the escalation of violence. Perceptions of resource scarcity or threats to access can elicit strong emotional responses, prompting people to take extreme steps to defend or obtain valued items. The urge to keep control over money and social position can exacerbate confrontations, leading individuals to engage in aggressive acts with disastrous outcomes.

To summarize, understanding the underlying reasons of murder-suicide incidents is crucial for designing effective prevention and intervention plans. This interdisciplinary study

emphasizes the importance of mate rivalry, status struggle, and resource defense in driving such severe behaviors.

For example, the 2015 case of Andreas Lubitz, the co-pilot who deliberately crashed Germanwings Flight 9525, killing all 150 persons on board, demonstrates the complex connection of psychological causes and perceived loss of status. Lubitz apparently feared losing his job owing to health difficulties, which might be interpreted as a trigger for status competition and control (BBC News, 2015).

In Japan, the 2008 Akihabara massacre, in which Tomohiro Kato killed seven people and injured ten more before attempting suicide, illustrates how social isolation, economic stress, and perceived social failure can drive someone to commit murder-suicide. Kato felt estranged and was apparently coping with employment insecurity and personal losses, which all contributed to his violent outburst (McCurry, 2008).

Another example is the San Bernardino shooting, in which a husband killed his estranged wife before killing himself in a classroom. This episode demonstrates the impact of status competition and a perceived loss of power in intimate relationships. The perpetrator's failure to cope with his perceived loss of status and control in his relationship resulted in an extreme reaction, consistent with theories emphasizing the role of social standing and power dynamics in violent behavior (Hamasaki & Simon, 2017).

### **Chapter 3, Methodology, Data Collection**

The thesis supervisor provided several texts for analysis, which included a relatively thorough depiction of narratives surrounding murder-suicide occurrences. Although each piece tells a different story, common themes emerge, revealing the complicated dynamics at work. Patterns and correlations among the texts have been identified through meticulous coding, providing insights into the underlying reasons and triggers for these sad events.

The eHRAF (electronic Human Relations Area Files) is a comprehensive online database created by the Human Relations Area Files organization at Yale University. It offers ethnographic material about cultures from all around the world, arranged by culture and subject, making it an excellent resource for cross-cultural research. The eHRAF works by indexing and categorizing thousands of anthropological materials, such as books, journal articles, and other scholarly works, allowing scholars to quickly access detailed cultural data. Despite its vast coverage, the eHRAF has one limitation: it may not include the most recent or all available ethnographic data, thereby leaving gaps in coverage.

Furthermore, the quality and depth of ethnographic data can differ among cultures. The restricted number of texts offered for this research (36 from civilizations such as the Akan, Blackfoot, Iroquois, Tiv, and Tlingit) further limits the capacity to generalize the findings. A limited sample size reduces the diversity and representativeness of the data, making it difficult to make broad generalizations that apply to all cultural contexts.

The texts depict people consumed by extreme emotions, ranging from jealousy and obsession to anger and desperation. Relationships are portrayed in these texts as tense, with suspicions of infidelity or perceived threats to status fueling out-of-control fights. Themes of possessiveness and entitlement emerge, driving the characters to extreme measures in their pursuit of supremacy or retribution.

In order to establish the themes depicted in the texts, six variables were selected for each category and are described as follows:

### **Mate Competition:**

Variable	Definition	Relevance
Jealousy Intensity	The level of jealousy experienced by the perpetrator towards a perceived rival for their romantic partner's affection.	Jealousy intensity is an important aspect of mate competition because it drives people to engage in behaviors that defend their relationship from possible rivals. High degrees of jealousy can result in diligent mate-guarding and protective acts that help to ensure a mate's exclusivity (Buss et al., 1992).
Obsessive Attachment	Degree of obsessive attachment to the romantic partner, leading to extreme reactions in response to perceived threats to the relationship.	Obsessive attachment is a sign of mate competition because it displays severe reliance and possessiveness, which can lead to individuals using coercive and monopolizing techniques to keep rivals from getting close to their spouse. This behavior is critical for minimizing competition and maintaining mate retention (Buss & Shackelford, 1997).
Perceived Infidelity	Belief or suspicion of infidelity by the romantic partner, triggering intense emotional responses such as betrayal and rage.	Perceived infidelity is important in mate competition because it prompts adaptive behaviors aimed at preserving relationship fidelity. Individuals who perceive a high danger of infidelity are more likely to increase mate-guarding activities, lowering the possibility of rival interference (Buss et al., 1992)
Sexual Frustration	Frustration resulting from unmet sexual desires or perceived sexual rejection, potentially leading to feelings of inadequacy or resentment.	Sexual frustration is important in mate rivalry because it might motivate people to seek out more mating options, enhancing the competitive dynamics of the mating market. This behavior may influence efforts to attract new partners and increase one's attractiveness (Kenrick & Keefe, 1992).
Competitive Rivalry	Direct competition with another individual for the attention or affection of the romantic	Competitive rivalry is a critical component of mate competition because it entails methods for

	partner, escalating to violent confrontations.	surpassing same-sex rivals for access to desired partners. This competition influences behaviors like as self-enhancement and derogation of competitors, both of which are necessary for mating success (Fisher & Cox, 2011).
Loss of Control	Inability to manage emotions or impulses when faced with perceived threats to the romantic relationship, leading to drastic actions such as murder-suicide.	Loss of control is a significant characteristic in mate rivalry because it can lead to impulsive and aggressive conduct, escalating confrontations with rivals and destabilizing partnerships. Such emotional deregulation can jeopardize mate retention efforts and intensify competition (Goetz et al., 2005).

### Status Competition:

Variable	Explanation	Reasoning/Relevance
Perceived Social Status	Perception of one's social standing relative to others, including feelings of inferiority or inadequacy in social hierarchies.	Perceived social status is an important aspect of status rivalry since it indicates an individual's relative standing and influence within a social hierarchy. Individuals struggle for better social status in order to get more access to resources, power, and social recognition, which can improve their overall social and economic prospects (Anderson et al., 2001).
Threat to Reputation	Perceived threats to reputation or social standing, such as rumors, gossip, or challenges to one's authority or prestige.	The threat to reputation is an important consideration in status rivalry since an individual's reputation influences their social standing and the respect they receive from others. Maintaining a positive reputation is vital for gaining alliances, trust, and support in competitive social settings (Martinescu et al., 2019).
Status Inconsistency	Discrepancy between one's perceived status and their actual social position, leading to feelings of frustration or resentment.	Status inconsistency, in which an individual's different status markers (e.g., wealth, education, occupation) are not in sync, can fuel status competition as people try to resolve these disparities. This inconsistency may prompt efforts

		to improve one's standing in less favorable areas in order to acquire a more balanced and elevated total social status (Diefenbach, 2013).
Entitlement Beliefs	Strong beliefs in entitlement to status or privileges, leading to extreme reactions when these are perceived to be threatened or undermined.	Individuals who believe they are entitled to specific advantages or status may engage in more aggressive activities to secure these imagined rights. Such ideas can motivate competitive behavior in order to assert one's position and demand acknowledgment and respect from others (Zitek & Vincent, 2015).
Humiliation	Experiences of public embarrassment or humiliation, triggering feelings of shame and the desire to restore one's sense of pride or honor.	Humiliation is important in status competition because humiliation or losing face can have a negative impact on an individual's social position. Individuals who are afraid of being humiliated may engage in competitive activities to maintain and promote their status, avoiding actions that could result in social disgrace (Leary et al., 2001).
Desperation for Recognition	Intense desire for recognition or validation from others, leading to extreme actions to assert dominance or regain lost status, even at the cost of resorting to violence.	Individuals who feel devalued or disregarded may go to tremendous lengths to acquire recognition and acceptance from others. This desperation may lead to more competitive actions aimed at improving one's visibility and perceived worth within the social hierarchy (Anderson et al., 2015).

### Resource Defense:

Variable	Explanation	Reasoning/Relevance
Economic Strain	Financial difficulties or scarcity of resources, leading to heightened stress and desperation to protect limited resources.	Economic strain is an important aspect of resource defense because it emphasizes the stresses that people or organizations encounter when resources are scarce or contested. This strain can lead to competitive behaviors aimed at obtaining and defending critical resources in order to maintain economic stability and survival (Agnew, 1992).

Property Disputes	Conflicts over ownership or control of valuable assets, such as property or finances, escalating to violence as a means of resolution.	Property disputes are critical to resource defense because they entail disagreements about the ownership and control of valuable assets. These disputes frequently develop when people or groups strive to claim their rights to resources, prompting defensive measures to preserve these assets from invasion or theft (Brown, 1964).
Territoriality	Strong attachment to a specific territory or domain, leading to aggressive responses to perceived encroachments or threats to one's territory.	Territoriality is an important part of resource defense since it requires establishing and maintaining control over a specific area with rich resources. Defending territory ensures that these resources are exclusively available to humans and animals, which is critical for survival and reproduction (Brown, 1964).
Access to Resources	Competition for access to essential resources, such as food, shelter, or employment, exacerbating tensions and conflicts within social groups.	Access to resources is an important aspect of resource defense since competition frequently revolves around obtaining enough resources to meet basic requirements and achieve social or economic objectives. Individuals and organizations will engage in defensive activities to ensure they have access to food, water, shelter, and other necessities (Brown, 1964).
Perceived Injustice	Belief in unfair distribution or allocation of resources, leading to feelings of resentment and a sense of entitlement to take matters into one's own hands.	Individuals or groups may engage in resource defense behaviors in response to perceived injustices or threats to their fair share of resources. This view can fuel increased competitiveness and conflict as parties try to correct inequalities and secure their rights (Agnew, 1992).
Threat of Loss	Fear of losing control over valuable resources or privileges, leading to extreme measures to defend against perceived threats, including resorting to violence in cases of desperation.	The threat of loss is a powerful motivator for resource defense, as people and groups work to prevent others from depleting or appropriating their resources. This threat may prompt proactive and protective measures to assure the ongoing availability and control of vital resources (Brown, 1964).

Understanding the interplay of numerous psychological and social elements in murder-suicide instances is critical for determining the reasons and triggers underlying such extreme conduct. Variables including jealousy intensity, compulsive attachment, perceived infidelity, and loss of control are especially important. Individuals with high degrees of jealousy and obsessive attachment may take extreme measures to protect their romantic relationships from perceived dangers, often terminating in violence when they believe they are losing control. Perceived infidelity can exacerbate mental distress and lead to tragic outcomes as people try to eliminate perceived rivals and regain control over their partner (Buss et al. 1992). These powerful emotional reactions can lead to murder-suicide as a distorted way of addressing severe relational difficulties (Joiner, 2007).

Similarly, variables related with status competition and resource defense, such as reputational risk, humiliation, economic stress, and territoriality, can all play important roles in murder-suicide scenarios. Threats to one's reputation and humiliation might lead to drastic behaviors to protect one's social status and feeling of self-worth (Leary et al., 2001). Economic stress and property disputes can aggravate feelings of desperation and perceived injustice, driving people to use violence as a final resort to recover control and relieve insurmountable pressures (Agnew, 1992; Brown, 1964). Territoriality and access to resources are also important, as conflicts over these can lead to fatal consequences when people believe their basic needs and rights are being jeopardized (Brown 1964). Understanding these characteristics assists in identifying potential risk factors and devising strategies to avert such incidents (Joiner, 2007; Martinescu et al., 2019).

## **Data Analysis**

Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA) is a systematic research method that quantifies and examines the existence, meanings, and correlations of certain words, themes, or concepts in qualitative data. By transforming textual data to numerical form, QCA allows researchers to spot trends and draw statistical conclusions about the data. In this analysis, QCA was used to code 36 texts from the Human Relations Area Files that represent a variety of civilizations, into binary terms (0 for "No" and 1 for "Yes") based on psychological, social, economic, and geographical variables. This method enabled a structured comparison of various cultural contexts, allowing for the discovery of key motifs and causes of aggressive behavior. The use of QCA provided a rigorous and replicable strategy for systematically examining the data, which improved the reliability and validity of the findings by removing potential biases inherent in qualitative studies.

## **Data Structure and Key Variables**

Key variables include aggressor and victim characteristics (gender and age), psychological and social factors (such as jealousy, attachment, and perceived infidelity), as well as factors related to loss of control, perceived social status, reputational threat, status inconsistency, and entitlement beliefs. In addition, the information addresses concerns of shame and need for recognition, economic and territorial factors, perceived injustice, and the prospect of loss. Each variable is coded to indicate the existence (1) or absence (0) of distinct conditions in different cultural contexts, allowing for systematic comparison and study.

## **Chapter 4, Results**

### **Aggressor and Victim Characteristics**

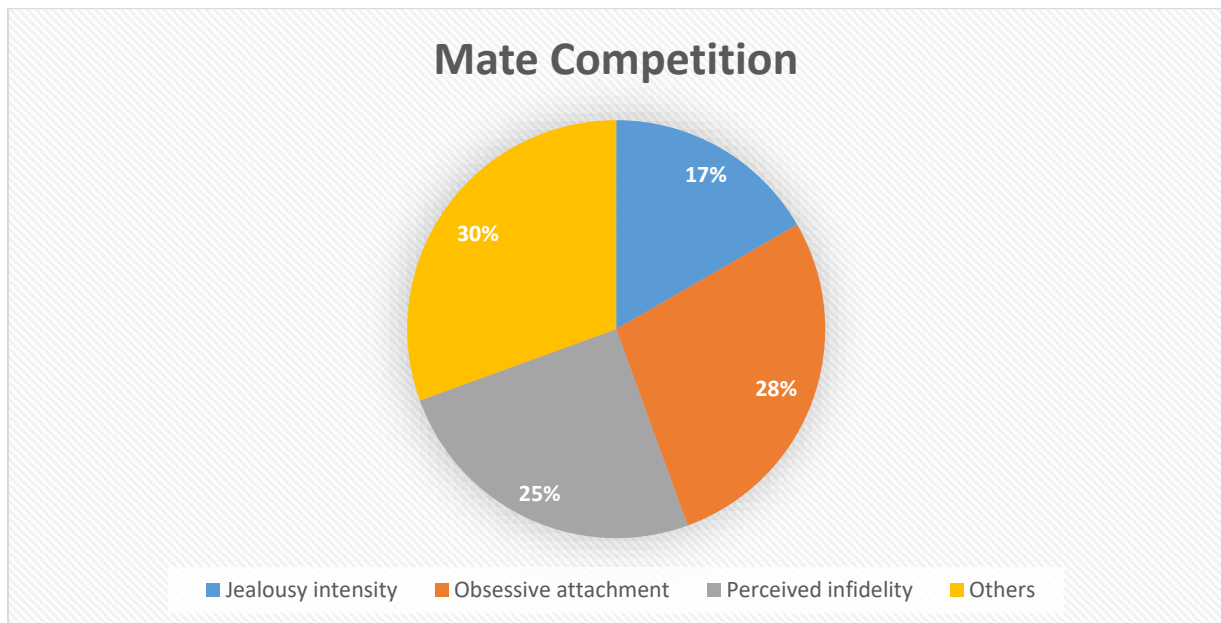
The research finds that male aggressors make up the vast majority of the dataset, with 25 records and 7 as females. This finding is consistent with criminological research that show a higher level of male engagement in aggressive behaviors (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). For example, hostile behaviors are frequently documented as male-dominated in Blackfoot and Iroquois communities. Female aggressors are less common, and while their manifestations vary, they are affected by various social and psychological factors (Campbell, 1999). The majority of aggressors are adults, with 30 cases labeled as "yes" for adult aggressors and only four cases coded as "no," indicating that aggressive behavior in these circumstances is largely carried out by adults rather than minors.

The dataset reveals a mixed response for male victims, with some instances indicating several victims. Victimization patterns in societies such as the Akan and Tlingit are usually characterized by complicated social dynamics, with males being particularly targeted. Female victims are relatively common, but less so than male victims. This diversity of victim characteristics emphasizes the complexities of victimization, which mirror broader societal norms and power relations (Felson, 2002). Adult victims are more common, as evidenced by 23 examples marked "yes" for adult victims. Minor victims, on the other hand, are rare, revealing special vulnerabilities within certain populations that require preventative measures.

### **Mate Competition**

Mate competition involves behaviors motivated by jealousy, suspected infidelity, and compulsive attachment. The dataset shows that jealousy intensity, while relatively low, is present in 6 cases, compulsive attachment emerges in 10 cases, and perceived infidelity is reported in 9 cases. These elements are significant because they frequently result in violent

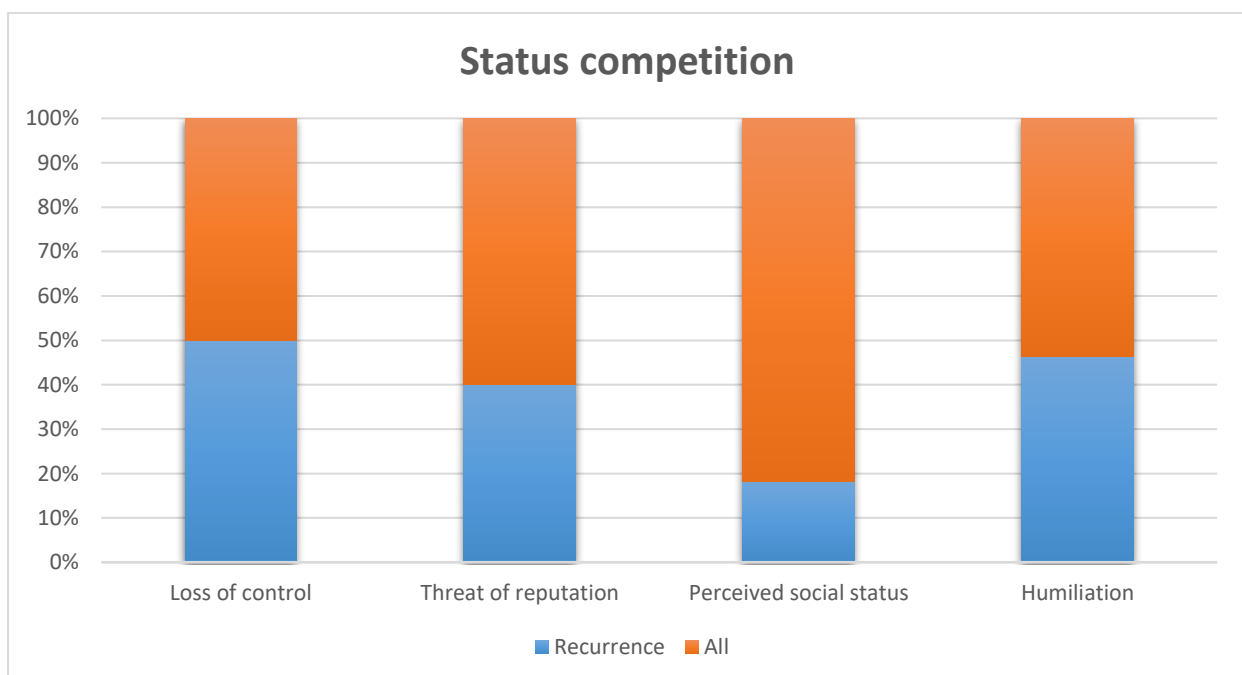
actions within intimate relationships. For example, in the Tiv culture, jealousy and perceived infidelity are important in interpreting marital disputes and violent behavior. These behaviors are consistent with evolutionary psychology theories, which state that mating rivalry frequently results in jealousy and possessiveness, potentially leading to conflict and aggression (Buss, 2000).



Surprisingly, the findings suggest that compulsive attachment is slightly more common than alleged infidelity, implying that emotional dependency may play a larger role in inciting aggressive conduct than previously considered. This finding emphasizes the role of emotional and psychological elements in mate rivalry across cultures. In the Akan culture, where polygamy is frequent, perceived infidelity can cause major conflict, emphasizing the importance of cultural context in mate rivalry (Firth, 1951). Furthermore, the Blackfoot and Iroquois tribes show similar patterns, with jealousy and attachment concerns frequently leading to aggressive conduct, demonstrating the universality of these psychological causes.

## Status Competition

Status competition refers to acts aimed at maintaining or improving social standing and reputation. The dataset shows that loss of control is generally important, as all 36 cases are labeled as "yes." This shows that perceived loss of control is a primary psychological trigger for aggressive conduct, which lends support to theories of aggression and frustration (Dollard et al., 1939). The threat to reputation, which is severe in 24 situations, frequently causes individuals to take violent measures to defend their social position, especially in hierarchical civilizations such as the Tlingit and Iroquois. In these societies, social reputation is inextricably linked to one's status and honor, making it an important consideration in social interactions. Humiliation is another significant motivator, with 31 occurrences categorized as "yes," frequently resulting in retaliatory behaviors to restore self-esteem.

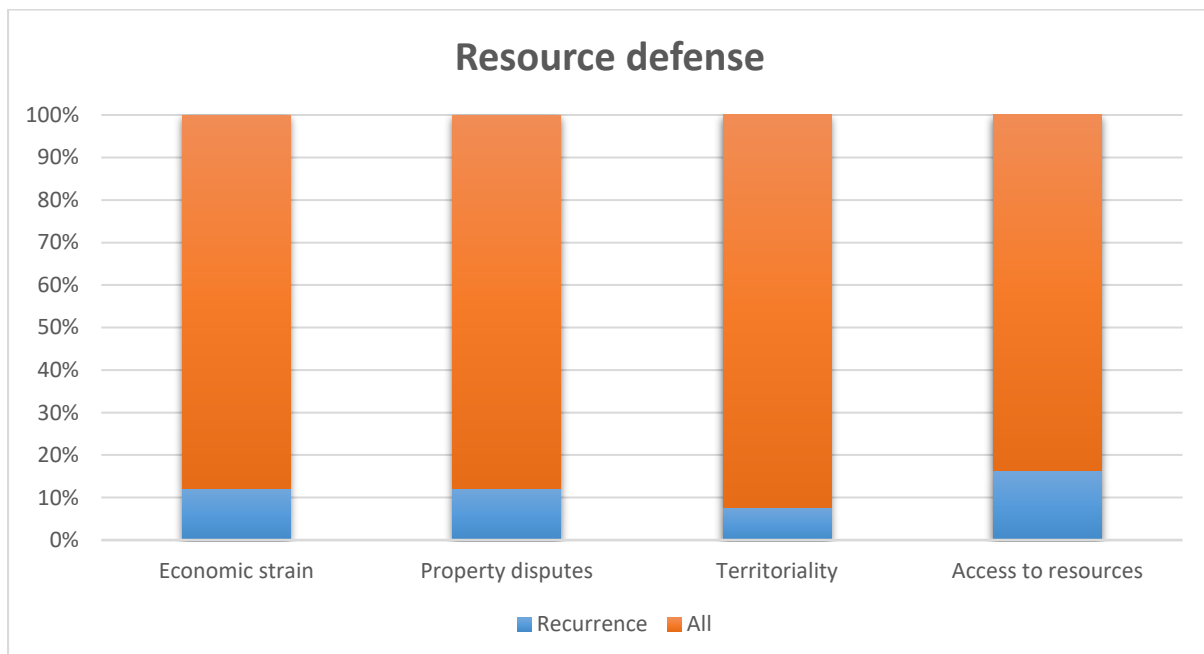


This is particularly evident in Akan culture, where public humiliation can elicit aggressive reactions as people try to reclaim their respect (Gilligan, 2003). An intriguing finding is the ubiquitous prevalence of loss of control across all cultures analyzed, highlighting it as a fundamental feature of human psychology in the setting of status struggle. The Iroquois and Tlingit cultures, where social hierarchy and honor are central, show that threats to

reputation and perceived social standing are powerful triggers for aggressiveness, reflecting human societies' profound desire for social recognition and respect.

### Resource defense

Economic pressures, property disputes, territoriality, and access to resources all influence resource defense behaviors. Economic strain is less common, appearing in only 5 cases, while property issues are also mentioned in 5 cases. Territoriality is uncommon, with only three occurrences labeled as "yes," although access to resources is more prevalent, appearing in seven cases. These indicators point to underlying social and economic inequities, which can intensify other pressures and lead to aggressive behavior. For example, in the Iroquois setting, property disputes can occasionally intensify due to historical and social causes, underlining the significance of resource competition in fueling conflict (Hobfoll, 1989).



Economic pressures, while less prominent, can nonetheless have a considerable impact on behavior since they frequently intensify other tensions within a group (Agnew, 2001). A noteworthy observation is that access to resources issues occur more frequently than territoriality, implying that resource competition is more about access and usage than territorial

ownership. In the Blackfoot culture, resource access issues frequently include hunting grounds and food supply, which are important for survival, exacerbating confrontations. The Tlingit confront comparable challenges, with access to fishing places causing substantial disputes, demonstrating the importance of resource availability in preserving societal unity.

## **Discussion**

The analysis of the coded dataset from the Human Relations Area Files, which is divided into three categories: mate competition, status competition, and resource defense, sheds light on the fundamental determinants of violent behavior in various cultural contexts. Psychological and social elements, particularly those connected to loss of control, shame, and perceived injustice, emerged as prominent in status competition. The universality of loss of control as a trigger for aggressiveness, as seen in all 36 cases, emphasizes its central importance in human psychology. This conclusion is consistent with existing theories of aggression and frustration, indicating that perceived loss of control can lead to aggressive behaviors as individuals attempt to restore control and maintain social order (Dollard et al., 1939). Similarly, humiliation plays an important role in driving aggressive behaviors, particularly in cultures such as the Akan and Tlingit, highlighting the deep-seated demand for social recognition and respect, which, when challenged, can result in powerful retaliatory acts (Gilligan, 2003).

In mate competition, jealousy, compulsive attachment, and perceived infidelity have all been recognized as key violence triggers. While jealousy intensity was relatively low, the presence of compulsive attachment and perceived infidelity in some cases demonstrates how important these emotional and psychological aspects are in intimate relationships. The Tiv culture, for example, exemplifies how jealousy and perceived infidelity can lead to marital disputes and aggressive conduct, mirroring broader evolutionary psychology theories on mate

rivalry and violence (Buss, 2000). This emphasizes the necessity of understanding emotional dynamics in relationships and their impact on behavior in various cultural contexts.

Resource defense, while less commonly mentioned in the dataset, is an important aspect in understanding violent behaviors motivated by economic and territorial pressures. Economic hardship, property conflicts, and access to resources were all significant factors in some cases, suggesting underlying social and economic disparities that might exacerbate other stressors and lead to violence. The Iroquois and Blackfoot societies demonstrate how resource competition, particularly over land and food supply, can motivate aggressive behavior. This conclusion implies that, while economic and territorial causes are not as common as psychological and social variables, they still play an important role in specific settings, contributing to the larger tapestry of human conflict and violence (Hobfoll, 1989).

## Chapter 5, Conclusion & Reflection

The coded dataset from the Human Relations Area Files was analyzed using Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA), which gave extensive insights into the key determinants of violent behavior across different cultural contexts. By classifying the data into mate competition, status competition, and resource defense, this thesis was able to discover important psychological, social, and economic influences on aggression. This study emphasizes the universality and specificity of these elements across a variety of cultural contexts, including the Akan, Blackfoot, Iroquois, Tiv, and Tlingit.

In the context of mate competition, jealousy, compulsive attachment, and perceived infidelity were identified as significant triggers for violent behavior. The data suggest that, while jealousy intensity was relatively low, the prevalence of obsessive attachment and perceived infidelity underscores the importance of these emotional and psychological elements in intimate relationships. This is clear in cultures like the Tiv, where jealousy and perceived adultery are critical in interpreting marital disputes and aggressive behavior. These findings are consistent with evolutionary psychology theories, which state that mate rivalry frequently results in jealousy and possessiveness, potentially leading to conflict and aggression (Buss, 2000). The somewhat higher prevalence of obsessive attachment compared to perceived infidelity emphasizes the relevance of emotional dependency as a trigger for aggression, revealing the complicated dynamics of intimate relationships in many cultural contexts.

Status competition involves acts aimed at maintaining or improving social standing and reputation. The dataset demonstrates that loss of control is a significant element, with all 36 cases labeled as "yes," showing it as a primary psychological trigger for aggressive conduct (Dollard et al., 1939). The threat to reputation, as seen in 24 examples, frequently causes individuals to take aggressive steps to defend their social status, particularly in hierarchical societies such as the Tlingit and Iroquois. In these civilizations, social reputation is inextricably

linked to one's rank and honor. Humiliation, which has been identified in 31 cases, can lead to retaliatory activities in order to restore self-esteem, as observed in Akan culture. The universal prevalence of loss of control across cultures emphasizes its importance in human psychology in the setting of status struggle.

Economic hardships, property disputes, territoriality, and access to resources all influence resource defense behaviors. These elements, albeit less common, are important in explaining violence in response to economic and territorial demands. Economic hardship and property issues both appeared in five cases, while territoriality was mentioned in three. Access to resources was more common, with seven examples. These elements reflect social and economic inequities, which intensify pressures that lead to violence. For example, in the Iroquois setting, historical and social variables can exacerbate property disputes (Hobfoll, 1989). Economic pressures, while less prominent, have a considerable impact on behavior, frequently increasing community tensions (Agnew, 2001). The prevalence of resource access issues relative to territoriality shows that competition is more concerned with resource access and usage. This is obvious in the Blackfoot culture, where disputes over hunting grounds are vital to survival, and the Tlingit, where access to fishing places can lead to large confrontations.

While these findings are valuable, it is important to recognize the study's limitations. The collection consists of only 36 texts from the Human Relations Area Files, which cover a limited number of civilizations. The small sample size limits the capacity to generalize the findings to all cultural contexts. Furthermore, the quality and depth of ethnographic information differ among cultures, potentially leading to coverage gaps and coding errors. These limitations indicate that, while the findings provide a useful framework for understanding aggressiveness that leads to murder-suicide, they should be interpreted with caution and supplemented with more research using bigger and more diverse datasets.

Another limitation is the binary coding system employed in the data analysis (0 for "No" and 1 for "Yes"). While this method allows for systematic comparison, it may oversimplify the complexity and nuance of human actions and cultural practices. Future studies could benefit from using more extensive and graded coding schemes, as well as qualitative analysis, to capture the nuances of cultural contexts and individual experiences. Furthermore, because the dataset is based on existing ethnographic literature, it may not fully capture contemporary advances and changes in cultural practices, demanding constant updates and expansions to assure its relevance and correctness.

Furthermore, the study's emphasis on individual cultures such as the Akan, Blackfoot, Iroquois, Tiv, and Tlingit, while presenting a diverse cultural perspective, may not cover the entire spectrum of world cultural variety. Cultural factors influencing aggression can vary greatly, and other cultures not included in this study may exhibit distinct patterns and causes of violent behavior. This constraint emphasizes the necessity for larger cross-cultural research that incorporate a broader range of cultural situations in order to improve the generalizability and applicability of the results.

In retrospect, the study emphasizes the intricate interaction of factors causing violent behaviors in various cultural situations. This study's findings emphasize the necessity of taking cultural nuances and context-specific dynamics into account when investigating social behaviors and consequences. Understanding these tendencies can help to inform theoretical models as well as practical approaches for dealing with and moderating violence and conflict in a variety of cultural contexts. Despite these limitations, the findings add to a better understanding of the psychological, social, and economic causes of aggressiveness that can lead to murder-suicide, laying the groundwork for future research and policy development. Addressing these constraints and broadening the breadth of research will allow researchers to

develop more comprehensive and culturally appropriate approaches to understanding and controlling aggression and conflict around the world.

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