

Lecture 14

- Aggression, continued.



Gaining Material and Social Rewards

Social Learning Theory of Aggression

- *Social learning theory of aggression* – theory that aggressive behavior is learned through:
 - Direct reward
 - (Father buys son ice cream after he wins a fight)
 - Observing others being rewarded for aggressiveness
 - (A television character wins the girl of his dreams as a result of killing several people)

Bobo Doll Experiment (1963)

Phase 1

- Pre-schoolers divided into two groups and put into two rooms with “attractive” toys while an unattractive blow up egg shaped clown (Bobo doll) sat by itself at the far end of the room.

Bobo (Phase 2)

- Group 1: While playing with the attractive toys, the children watched an adult come into the room and start beating the daylights out of the Bobo doll.
- Group 2: While playing with the attractive toys, the children watched an adult come into the room and be very nice to Bobo.

Bobo (Stage 3)

- The attractive toys were taken away from each group.
- What happened?

Bobo Doll Experiment (1963)

Bandura and many others found that 88% of the children who saw an adult hit bobo, imitated the aggressive behavior.

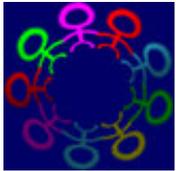
Eight months later, 40% of the same children reproduce the violent behavior observed in the Bobo doll experiment



Gaining Material & Social Rewards



Who Finds Rewards in
Violence?



Glamorized Violence in the
Media



Violent Media Magnify
Violent Inclinations



Who Finds Rewards in Violence?

- *Psychopath* –
an individual characterized by:
 - Lack of empathy for others
 - Grandiose self-worth
 - Lack of sensitivity to punishment
- Psychopaths are inclined to act violently if it brings them personal gain.



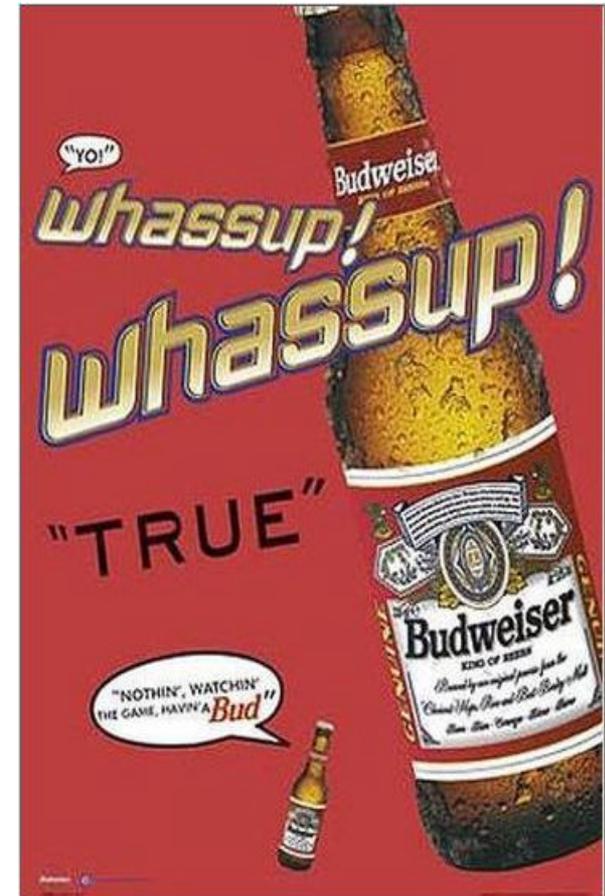
Who Finds Rewards in Violence?

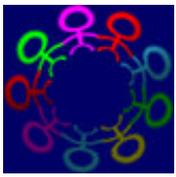
- Feelings of empathy (sharing the emotions of another) make aggressive behavior unrewarding.



Who Finds Rewards in Violence?

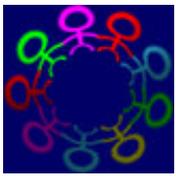
- Alcohol intoxication may turn off normal empathic feelings.
- One study found that men who beat their wives drank 13 times as much as nonviolent patrons of the same pub (Lindemann et al., 1992).





Glamorized Violence in The Media

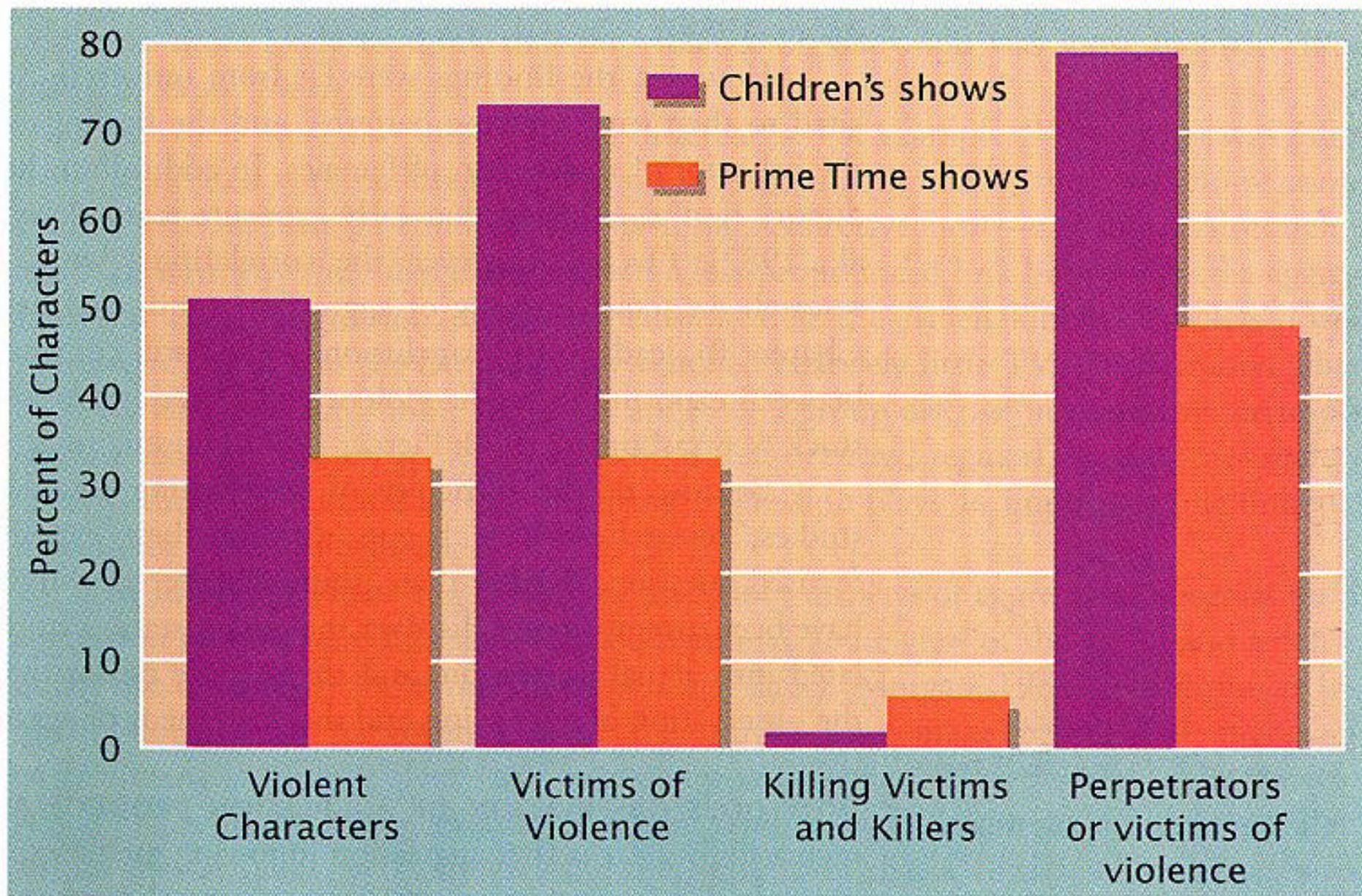
- Most people watch a considerable amount of television--an average of 4 hours each day. That works out to about 17% of their lives or about 11.5 years. A fair amount of television programming is violent in nature
- The typical American child sees 100,000 acts of violence on TV before finishing grammar school (Huston et al., 1992).



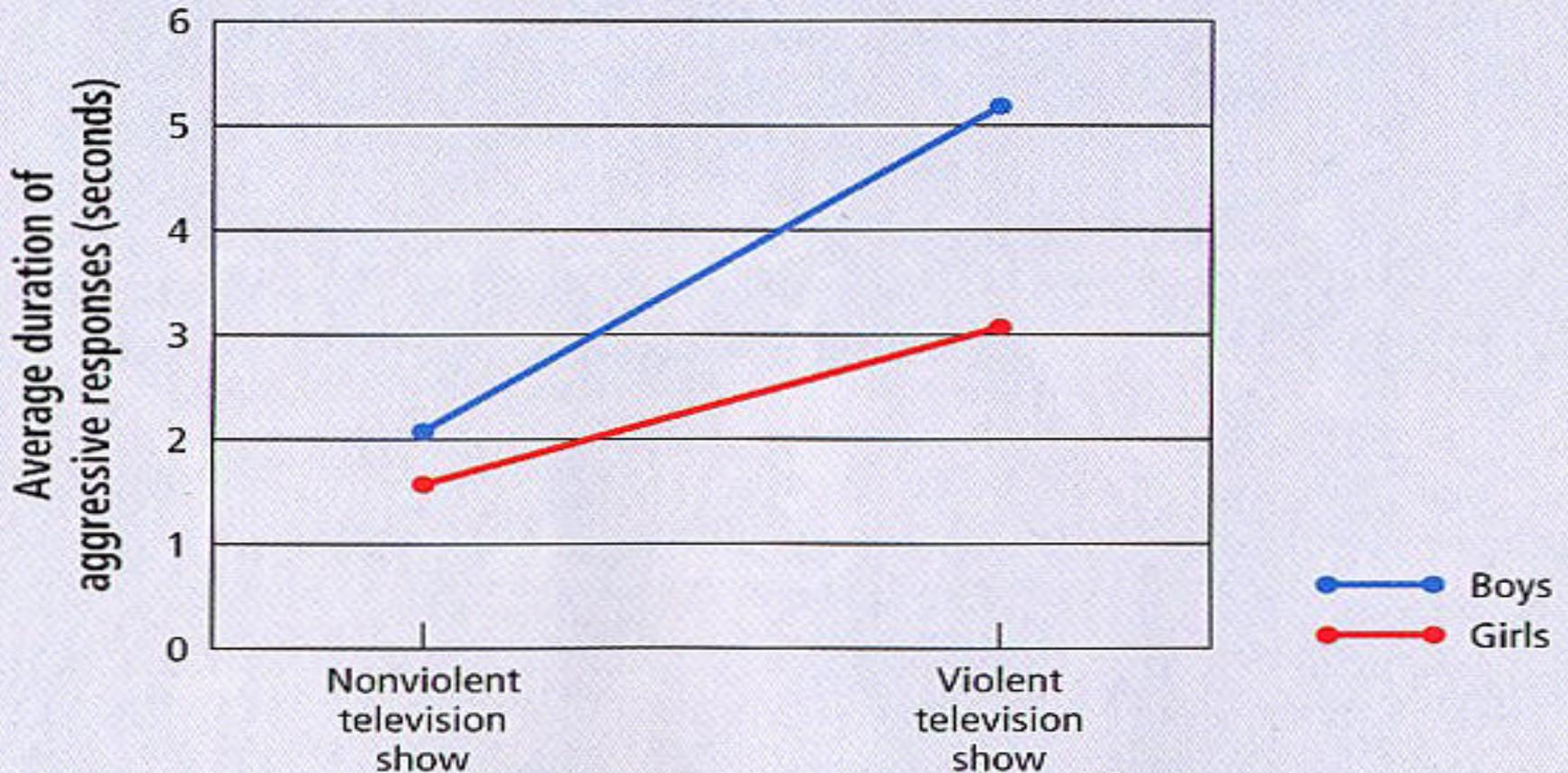
Glamorized Violence in The Media

- Watching a lot of violent TV is *correlated* with more violent behavior towards peers.
- Experimental studies, in which violence is controlled, also find effects of watching violence.

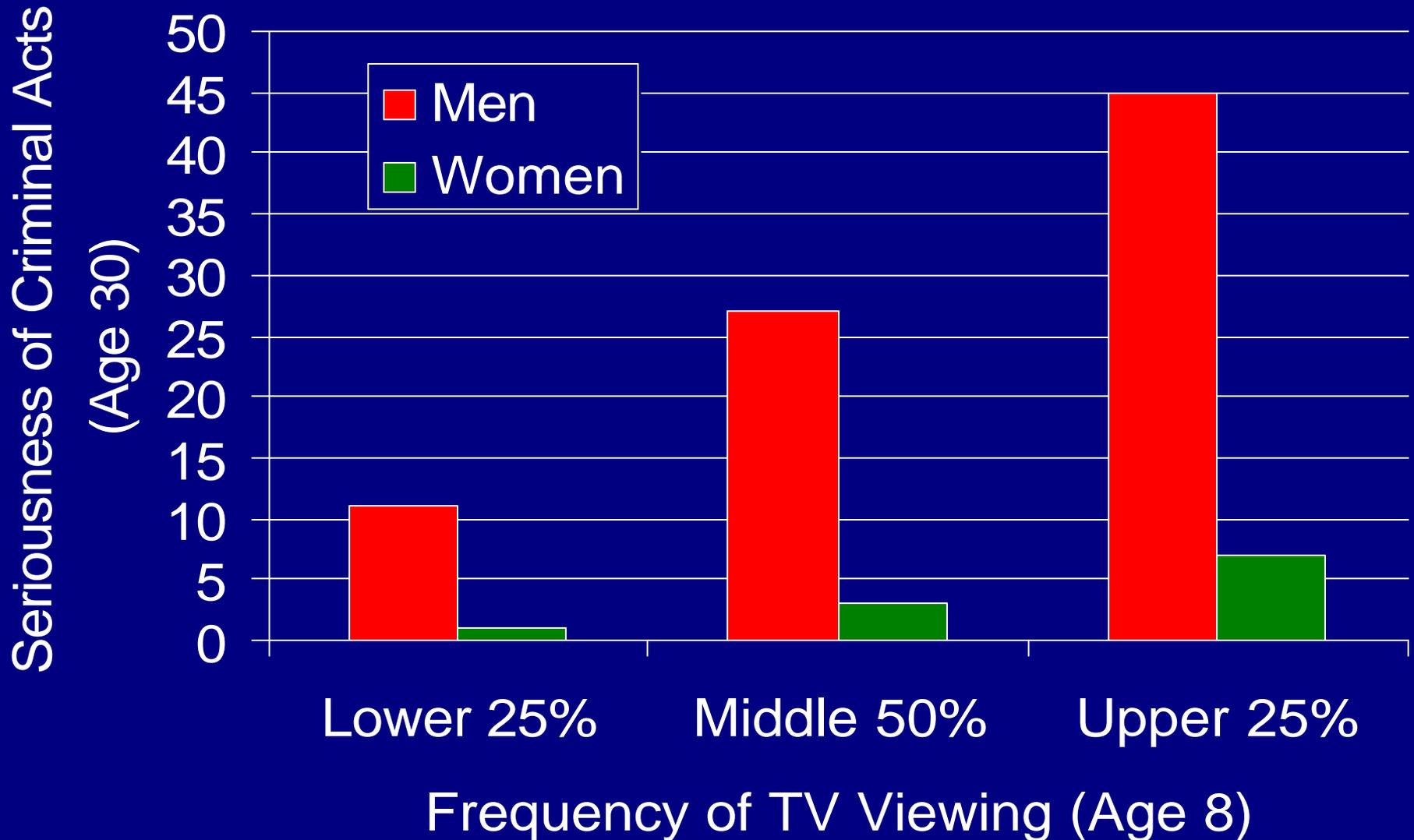
FIGURE 9-1 Violence on Television Violence in television programs targeted for both children and adults occurs at high levels. (Source: George Gerbner, University of Pennsylvania.)



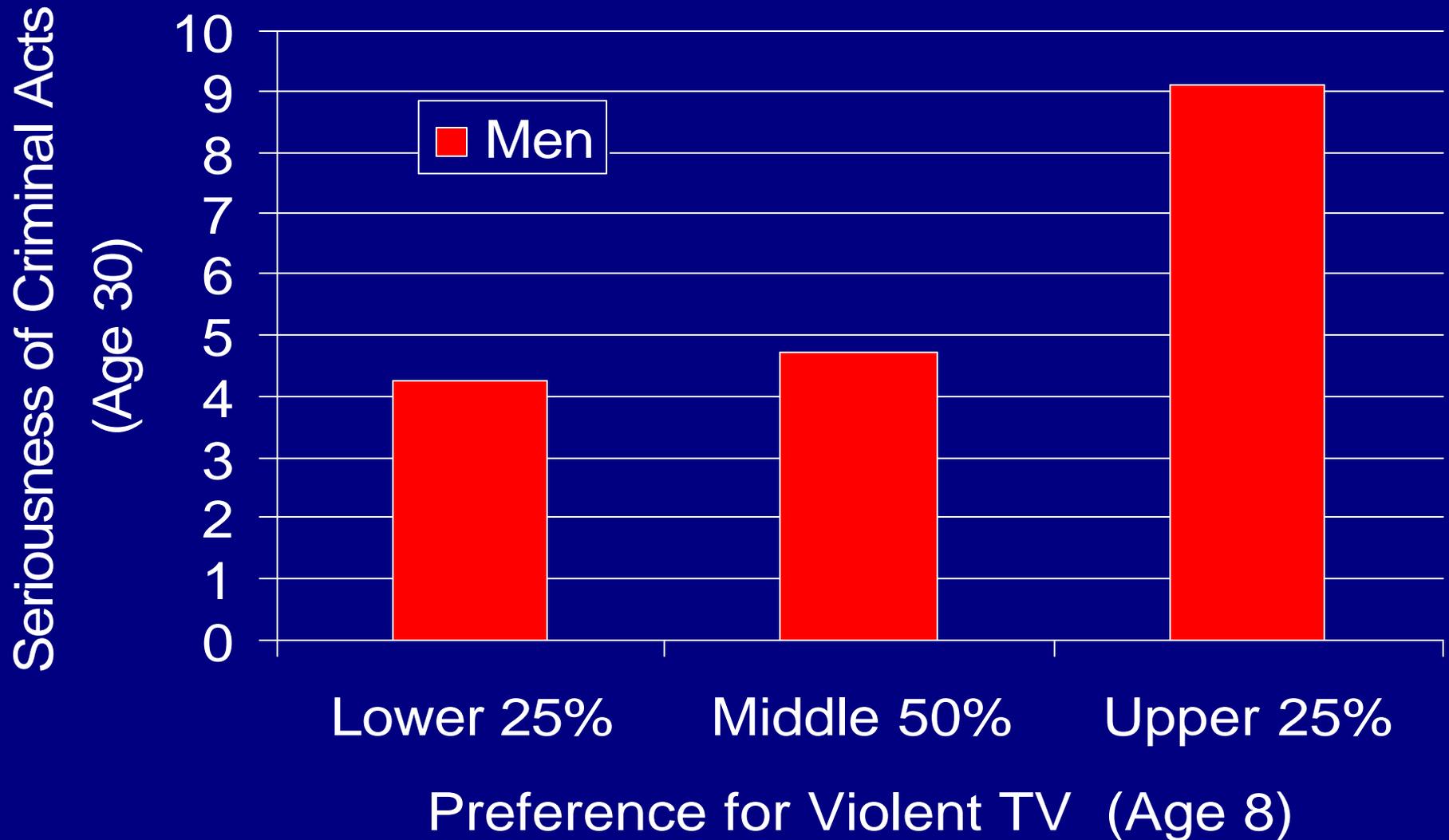
Liebert and Baron (1972) found that exposure to a violent TV show increased subsequent aggression, especially among boys.



Frequent TV viewing is related to later aggression, especially for boys . . .

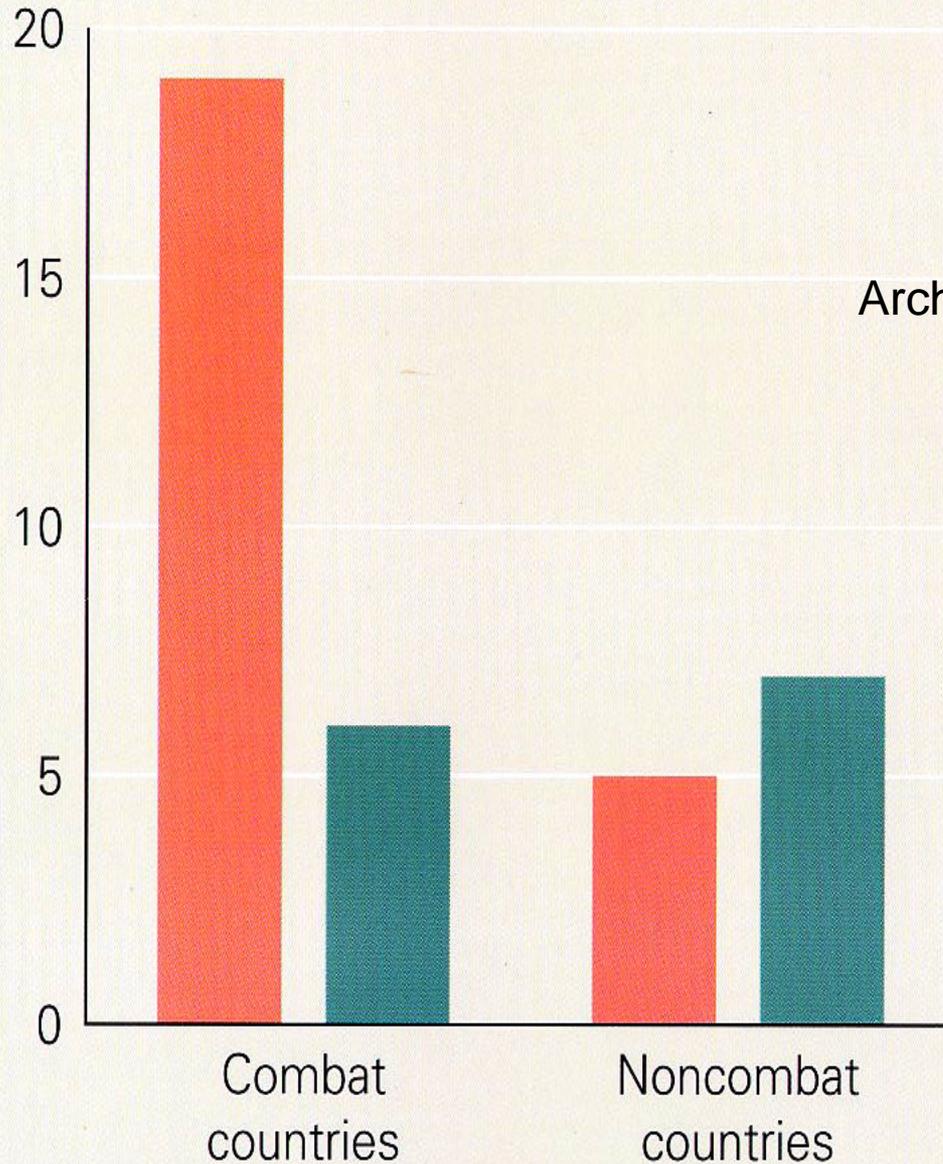


Preference for violent TV is related to adult criminal behavior . . .



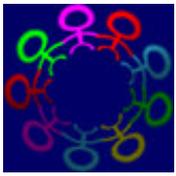
Aggressive models on a large scale?

**Number of countries
(combat vs. noncombat)
showing either an increase or a
decrease in homicide rates after
World War I and World War II**



Archer and Gartner (1976)

- Countries that showed increases
- Countries that showed decreases



Glamorizing Violence

- Because many researchers have studied effects of violent media, and results are not all consistent, researchers combined many results.
- Conclusion – there is an effect worth worrying about at the population level.

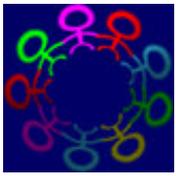
LIVES: 2

53950

Space Blaster

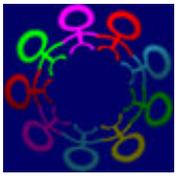
Doomsday Version 2.5





Violent Video Games

- Playing violent video games is associated with a history of property destruction and hitting other students.
- College students randomly assigned to play a violent video game (Wulfenstein) later had more aggressive thoughts and feelings than those who played a nonviolent game (Tetrix) (Anderson & Dill, 2000)

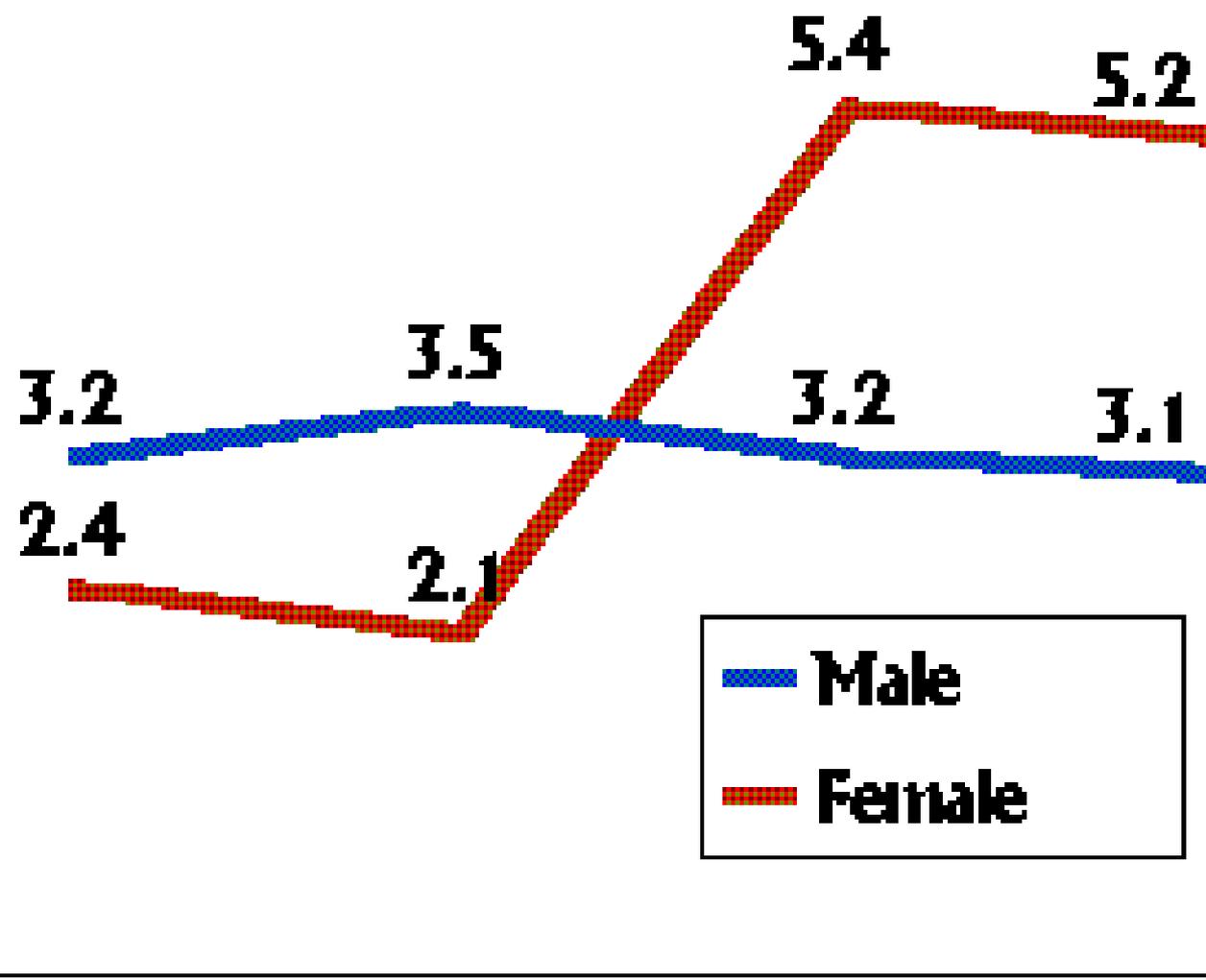


Violent Pornography

- Correlational and experimental data suggest that a relationship between pornography and men's hostility to women:
 - Does exist to some extent
 - Is particularly found in violent pornography
 - Is more likely among men who have several risk factors for violence against women (Malamuth et al., 2001).

Shock Level

6
5
4
3
2
1
0



Neutral

Erotic

Pos. end

Neg. end

Film Condition

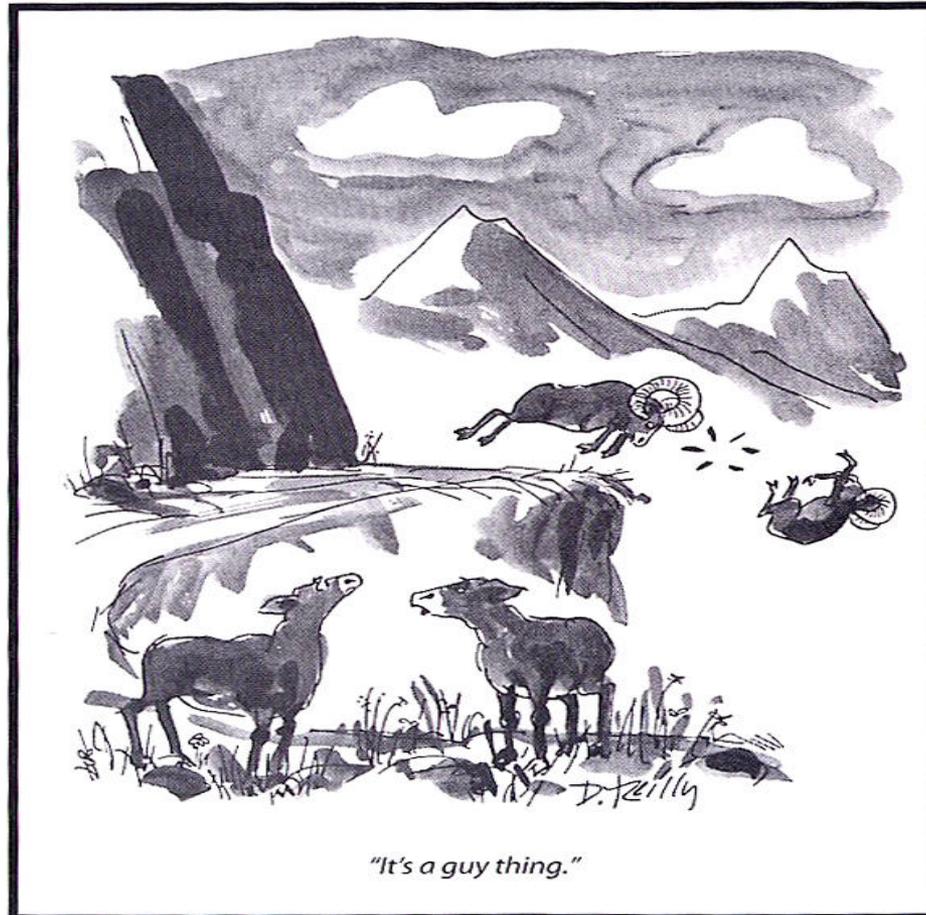
Male
Female



Violent Media Magnify Violent Inclinations

- Movie-goers filled out an aggression questionnaire as they entered, or left
 - a violent movie, or
 - a non-violent movie.
- Those choosing the violent movie were more aggressive to begin with.
- They became even more aggressive after watching the violent movie (Black & Bevan, 1992).

Gaining or Maintaining Social Status



Aggression and Sexual Selection

- *Differential parental investment* – the principle that animals making higher investments in their offspring will be more careful in choosing mates
- Because female mammals always contribute to offspring by carrying fetus and nursing young, they are generally highly selective in choosing males with which to mate.

Aggression and Sexual Selection

- *Sexual selection* –
a form of natural selection favoring characteristics that assist animals in:
 - Attracting mates
 - Competing with members of their own sex to win mates
- When one sex makes higher parental investment, the other sex tends to show more sexually selected traits (e.g., antlers) .

Aggression and Sexual Selection

- Because humans are mammals, and mammalian females are always selective about choosing mates:
 - Human males are expected to compete more vigorously for status.
 - Symptoms of this intra-sexual competition should be found across cultures and historical periods.



Table 9.1. Police Attribution of Motive in 1060 Spousal Homicides in Canada, 1974–1983

| | Killer is the husband | Killer is the wife | Total |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Argument | 353 | 160 | 513 |
| Jealousy | 195 | 19 | 214 |
| Anger/hatred | 84 | 22 | 106 |
| Mentally ill/retarded | 59 | 7 | 66 |
| Revenge | 27 | 7 | 34 |
| Self-defense | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Inadvertent act | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| Robbery | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| During other offense | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Rape | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| During escape | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other motive | 38 | 9 | 47 |
| No motive attributed | 46 | 8 | 54 |
| Total cases | 812 | 248 | 1060 |

Aggression and Kin Selection

- Natural selection produces “organic mechanisms” that results in *less conflict* and *more cooperation* between close genetic relatives.
- Logic: You can pass on your genes either through your own children, or your through your cousins, siblings, and other relatives.

Kin Selection and Homicide

- As a result of kin selection, individuals should:
 - 1.) Be *less* likely to kill their own children and related family members than non-relatives.
 - 2.) Be *more* likely to cooperate when competing against non-relatives.

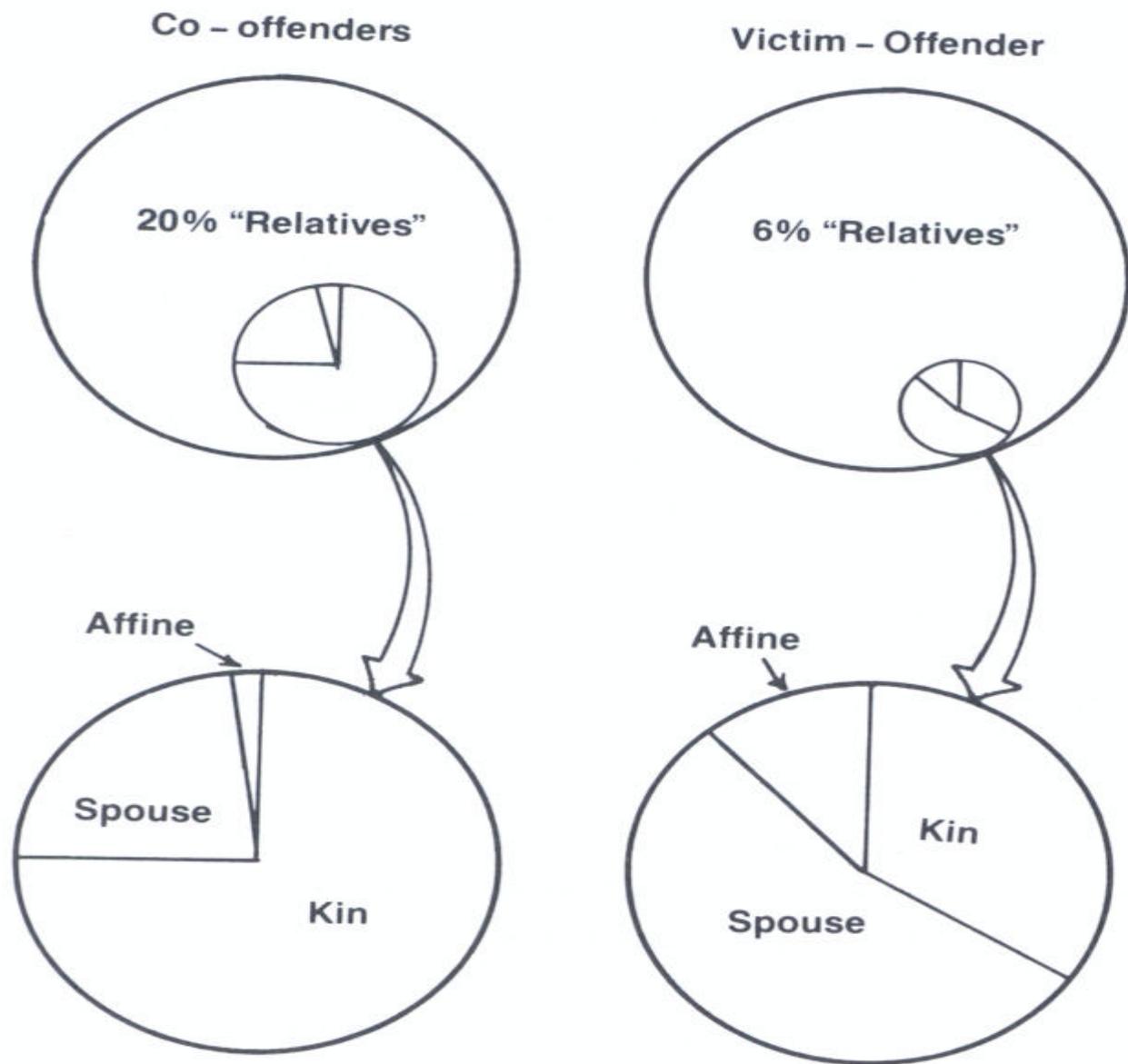


Figure 2.1. Kinship and homicidal conflict in 13th-century England. 2434 homicides form the data base. (After Given, 1977, Tables 5, 6, and 21.)

Table 2.2. Estimated Average Relatedness of Victim-and-Offender versus Co-offenders^a

| | Relationship | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Victim-offender | | Co-offender | |
| | <i>r</i> | (<i>N</i>) | <i>r</i> | (<i>N</i>) |
| Detroit | .03 <i>low</i> | (508) | .09 <i>high</i> | (43) |
| Miami | .01 | (494) | .09 | (27) |
| Bison-Horn Maria | .09 | (130) | .16 | (17) |
| Bhil | .05 | (100) | .27 | (22) |
| Munda | .07 | (47) | .33 | (9) |
| Oraon | .06 | (43) | .23 | (7) |
| Tzeltal Mayans | .08 | (26) | .35 | (6) |
| Gros Ventre | .01 | (14) | .50 | (1) |
| 13th-Century England | .01 | (2434) | .08 | (2372) |

^a... (1970) Munda and Oraon (Seran 1974) are all "aboriginals"

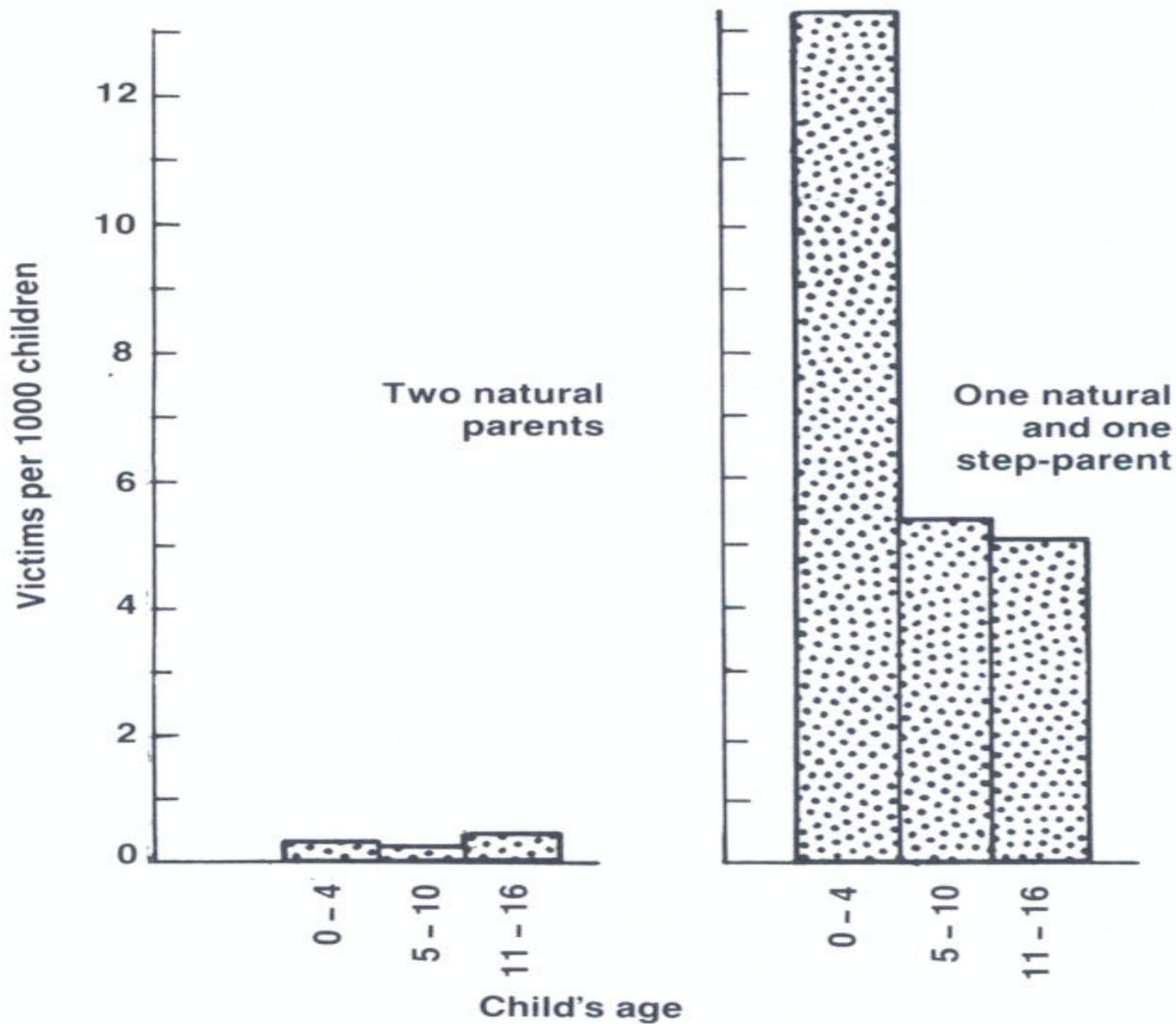


Figure 4.8. Per capita rates of child abuse cases known to children's aid societies and reported to a provincial registry. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, 1983. (Modified from Daly & Wilson, 1985.)

Aggression and Paternal Certainty

- Males face the problem of being a cuckold, or raising a child that is not their own.
- Because of problems with paternal certainty, males are likely to be *jealous* and *protective* of their mates.

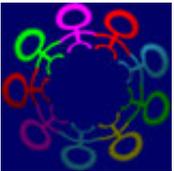
Paternal Certainty, and Abuse

- Females are much more likely to be killed by a husband or boyfriend than males are to be killed by a wife or girlfriend.
- Pattern reflects attempts of males to control females (e.g., prevent break-ups).

Gaining or Maintaining Status



Sex and Testosterone



Insults and other “Trivial
Altercations”



Different Opportunity Paths



Sex and Testosterone

- *Testosterone* – hormone linked to masculine body development and behavior in a wide range of species
- Hens given testosterone act like roosters, and rise in dominance hierarchy.



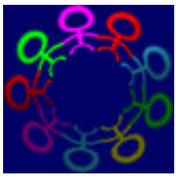
Sex and Testosterone

- Social psychologist Jim Dabbs & colleagues found high testosterone levels in:
 - Aggressive boys
 - Violent criminals
 - Men and women with criminal records
 - Military veterans who went AWOL or got into trouble after their service.



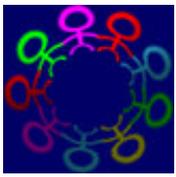
Sex and Testosterone

- Dutch psychologist Stephanie VanGoozen & colleagues studied people undergoing sex change operations:
 - Women changing to men got testosterone injections – became more aggressive and sexual.
 - Men changing to women got testosterone suppressants – became less aggressive and sexual.



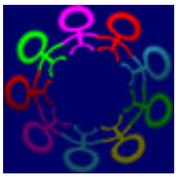
Insults & Other “Trivial Altercations”

- Insults have been linked to:
 - Aggressive behavior in the lab
 - Teenagers’ descriptions of events that made them most angry
 - College students’ homicidal fantasies
 - Urban gang fights
 - A substantial portion of male homicides



Insults & Other “Trivial Altercations”

- *Culture of honor* – a set of societal norms whose central idea is that people (particularly men) should be ready to defend their honor with violent retaliation if necessary



Insults & Other “Trivial Altercations”

- Southern U.S. has more honor-related homicides (Nisbett et al., 1995).
- Southern students respond more aggressively to an insult in a lab setting (Cohen, et al., 1996).

“Cultures of Honor”

- Sets of cultural rules stress how individuals *should* resolve their own disputes and protect their honor.
- Found among societies with weak state justice systems, and/or with property that is easy to steal such as cattle.

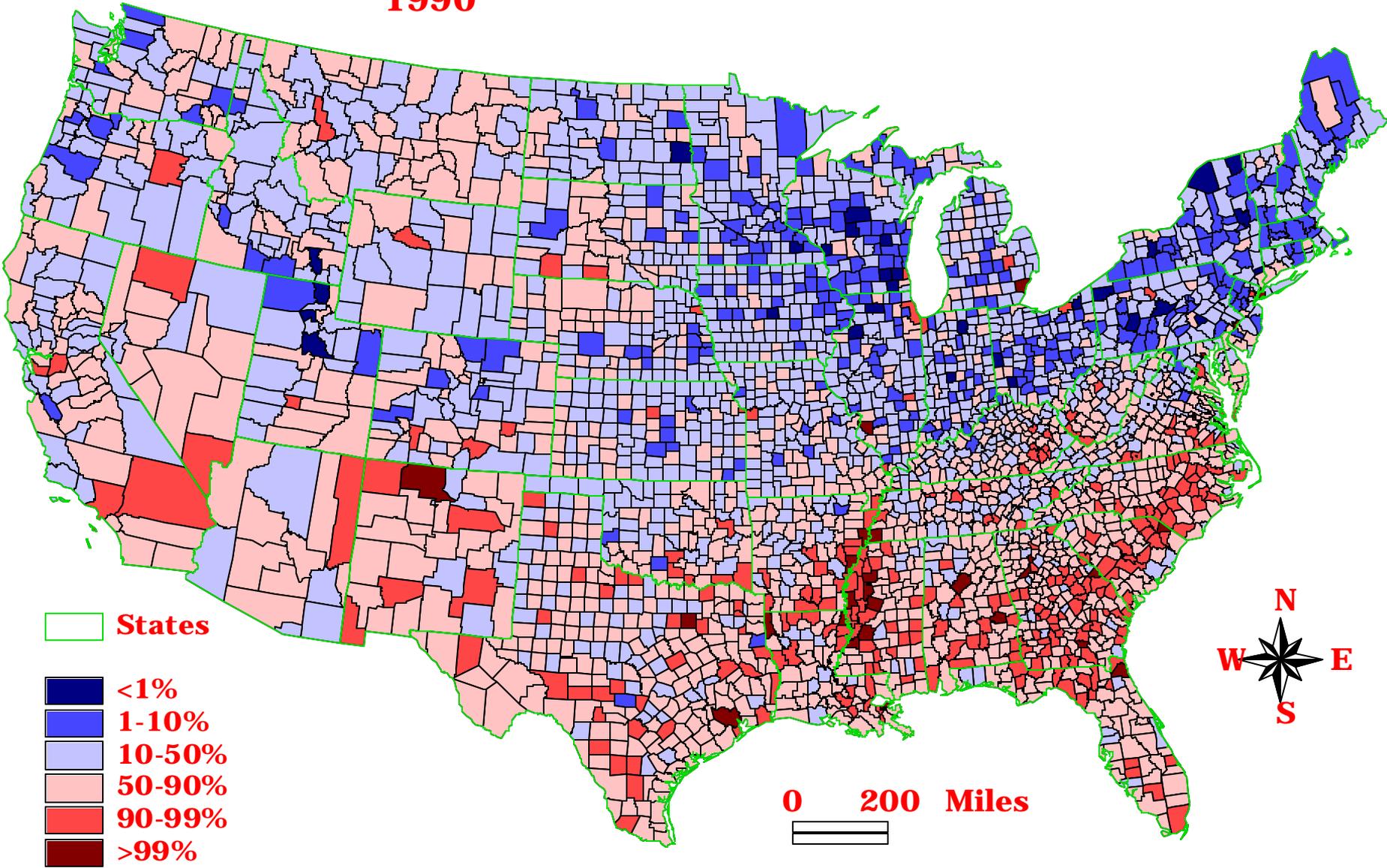
Peacemaking Culture

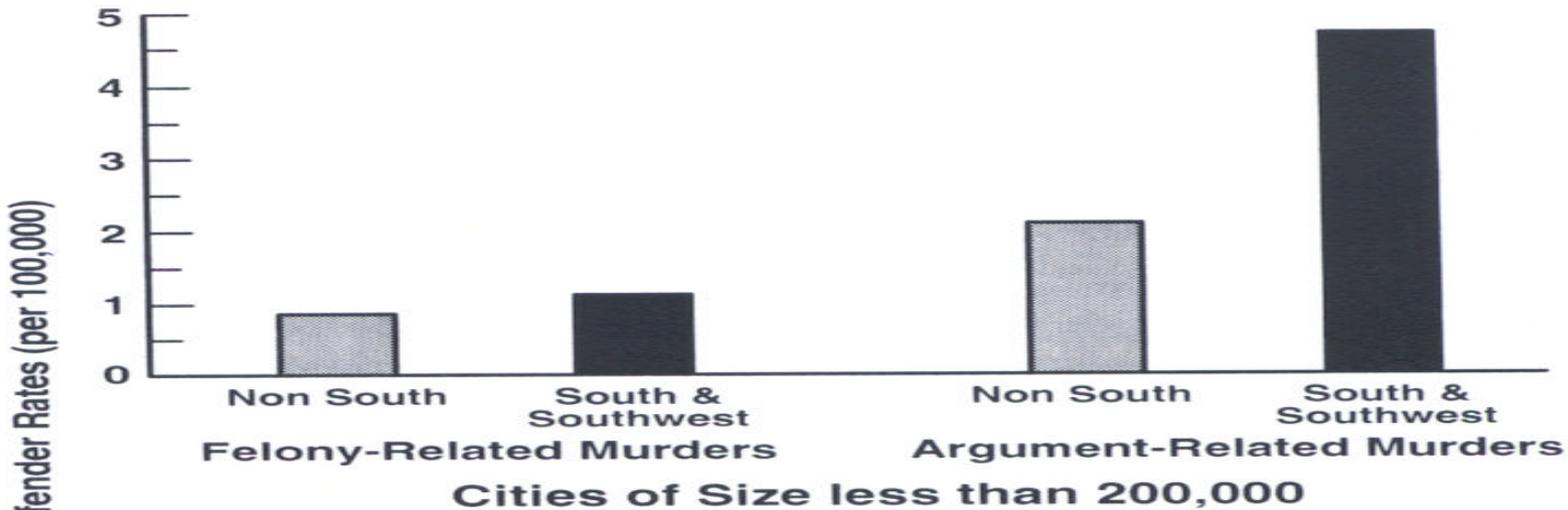
- Sets of rules stress that individuals should *not* resolve their own disputes aggressively, but should turn to other people in society to help them peacefully resolve dispute.
- Found among societies that depend on cooperation and trust (farming societies, or capitalistic societies)

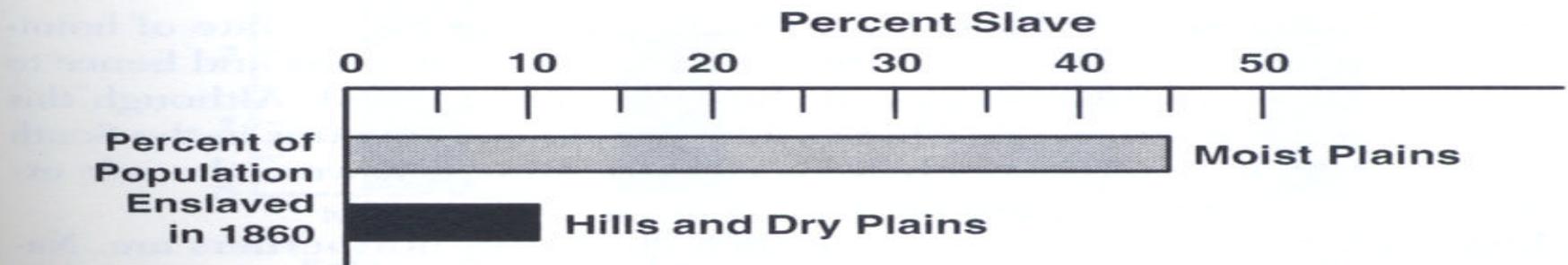
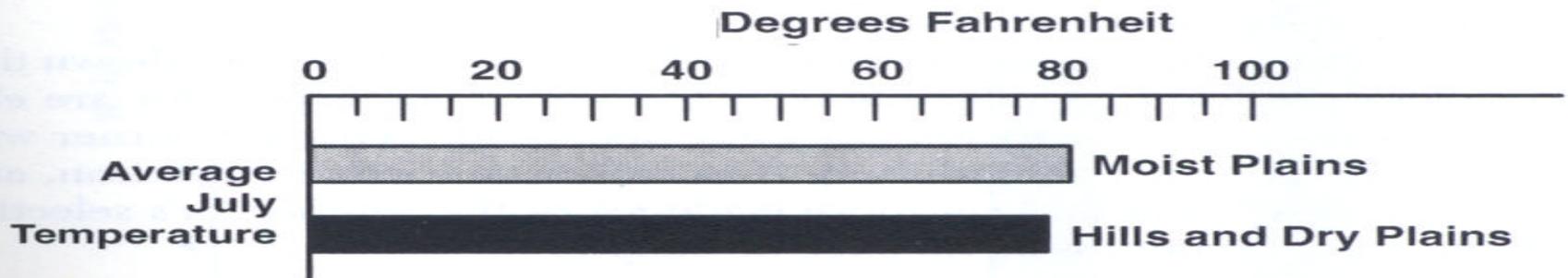
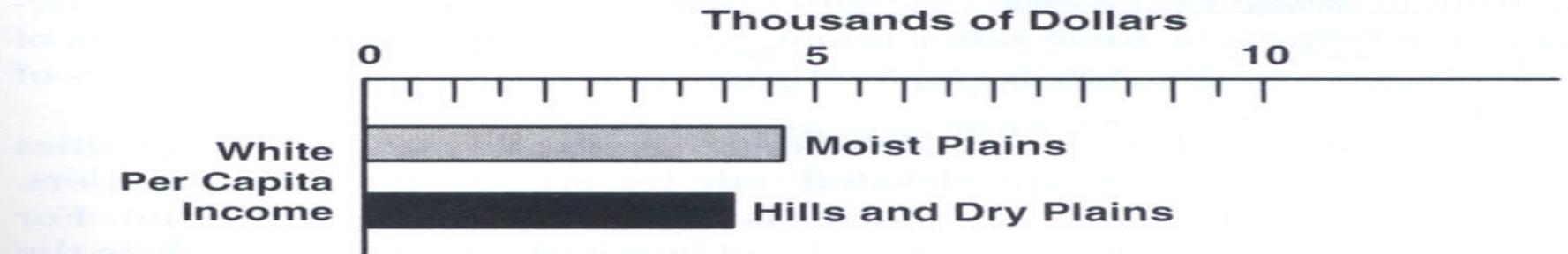
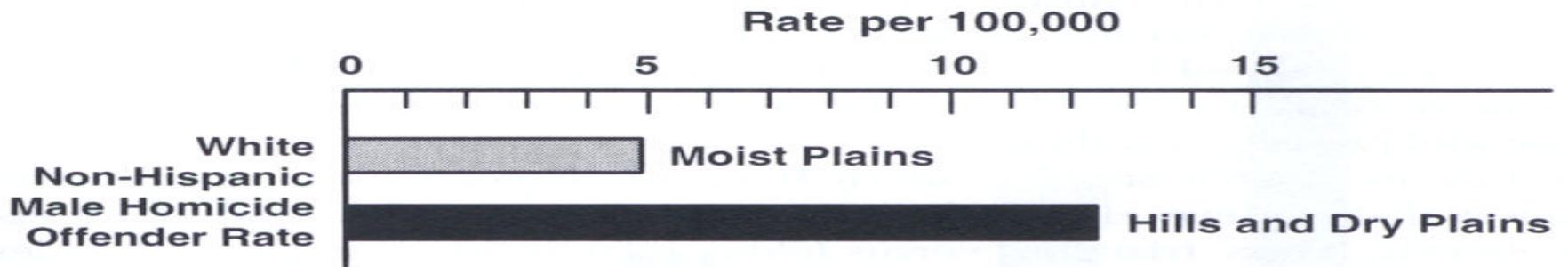
American Southern Violence

- Historians have documented that Scott-Irish cattle herders settled in the South. The state was much weaker in the South.
- Because culture often persists, it may be that “cultures of honor” remain important in the South today.

Percentile Map Homicide Rate (EBS) 1990







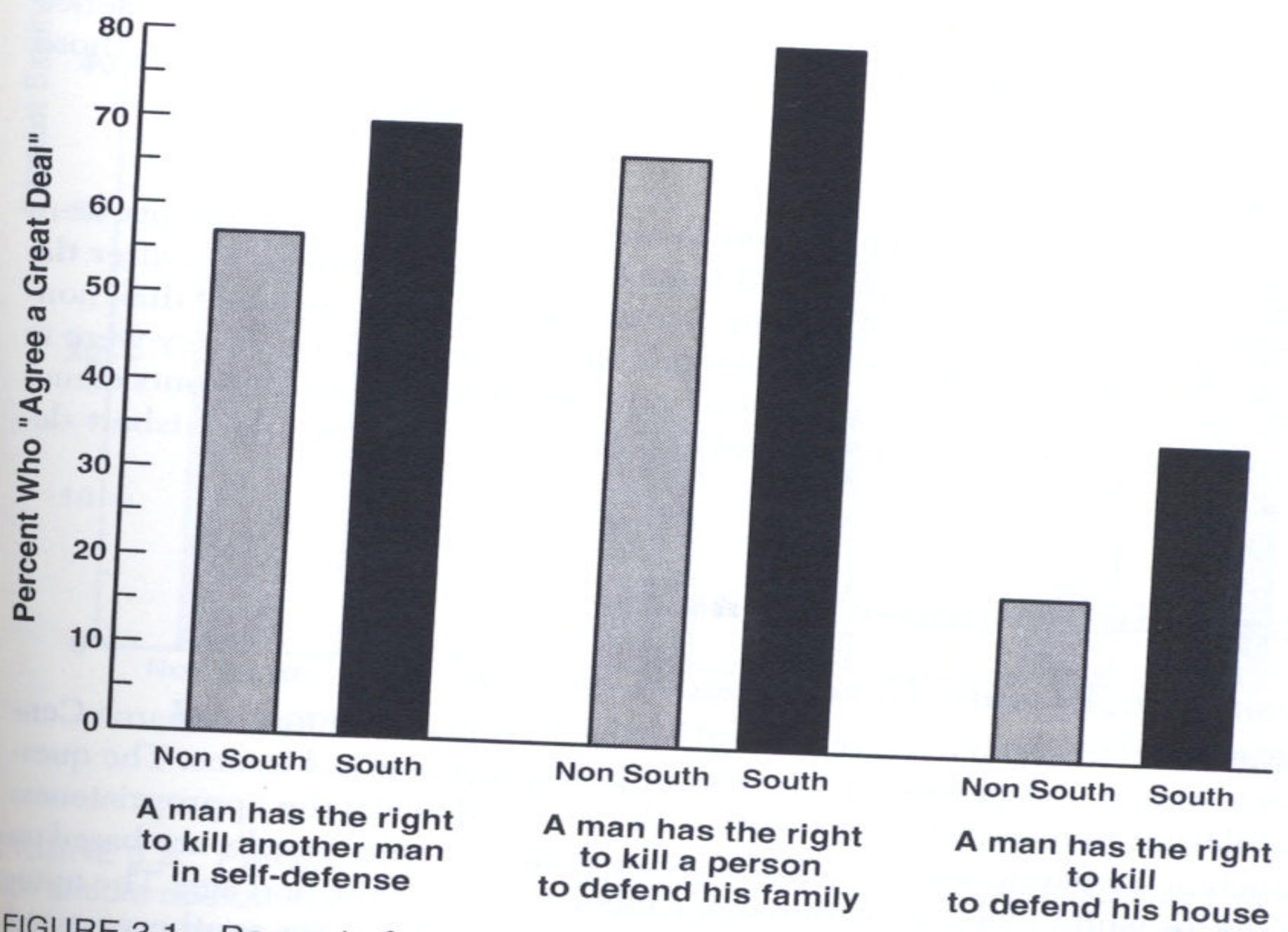


FIGURE 3.1 Percent of southern and non-southern

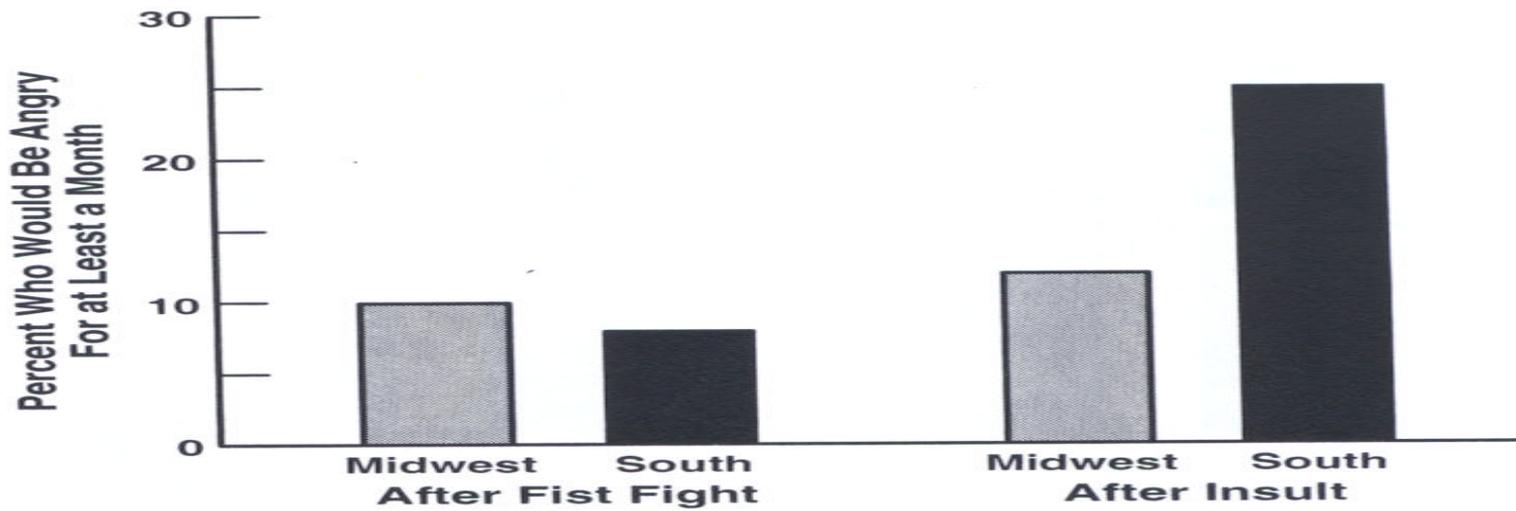


FIGURE 3.4 Percent of southerners and midwesterners saying they would be angry with a friend for at least a month following a fist fight and following an insult. Source: Cohen and Nisbett, 1994.

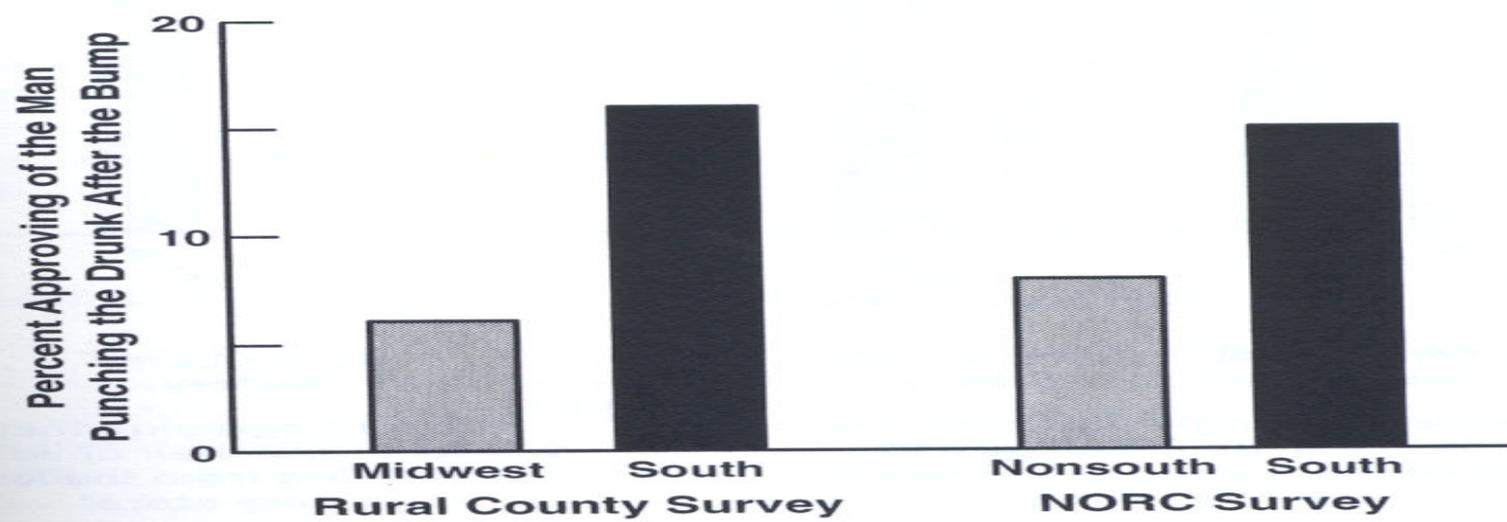


FIGURE 3.5 Percent of southerners and midwesterners who approved punching "a drunk who bumps into a man and his wife." Sources: Cohen and Nisbett, 1994; Davis and Smith, 1990.

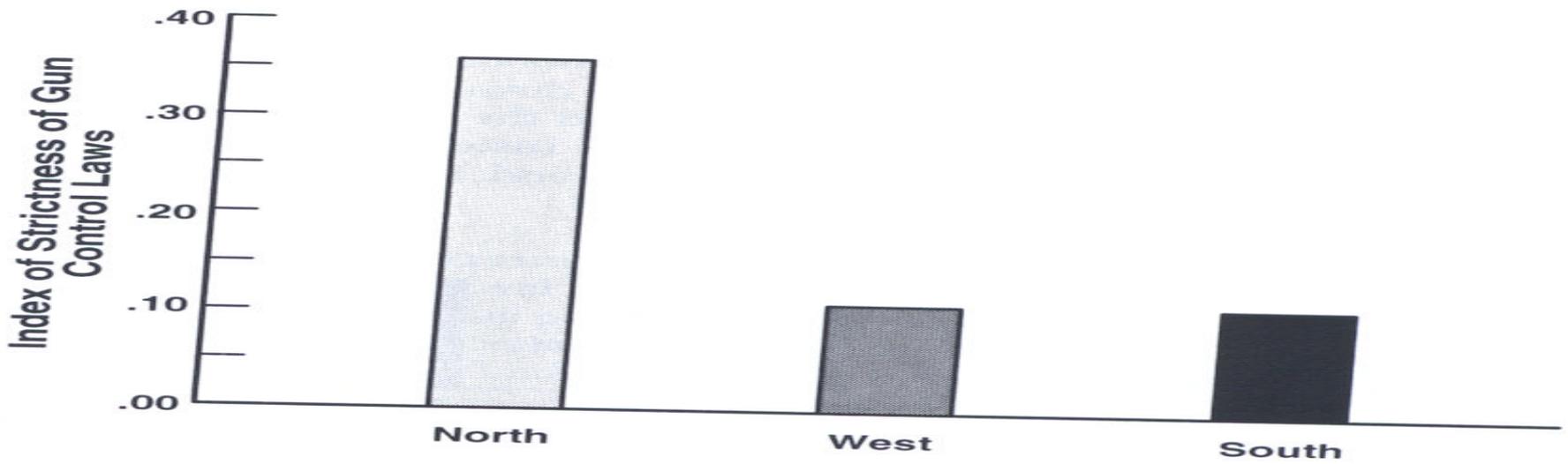


FIGURE 5.1 Strictness of gun control laws in the North, West, and South in 1992. Source: National Rifle Association, 1992.

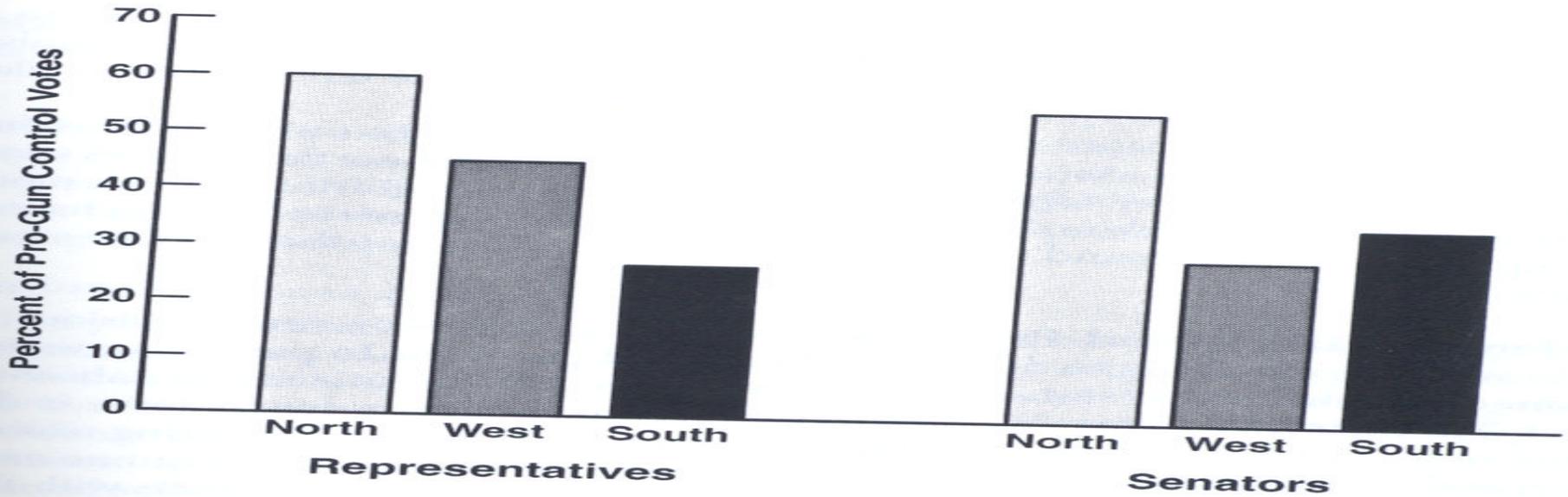


FIGURE 5.2 Percent of pro-gun control votes in the House of Representatives and the Senate from 1985 to 1991, by region. Source: Handgun Control Incorporated.

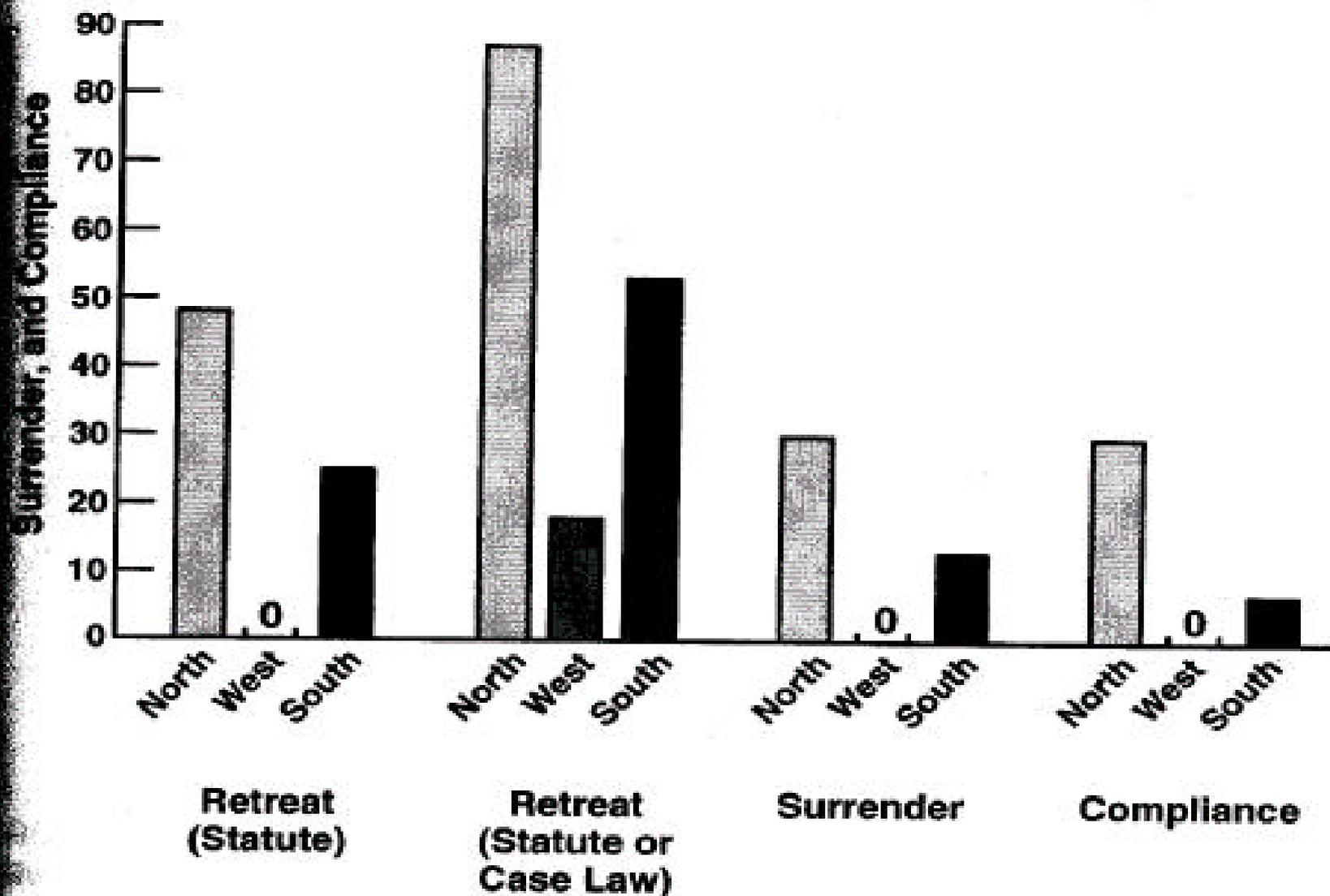


FIGURE 5.3 Percent of states in each region requiring retreat, surrender, and compliance to demands rather than killing an assailant. Source: Cohen, 1995.

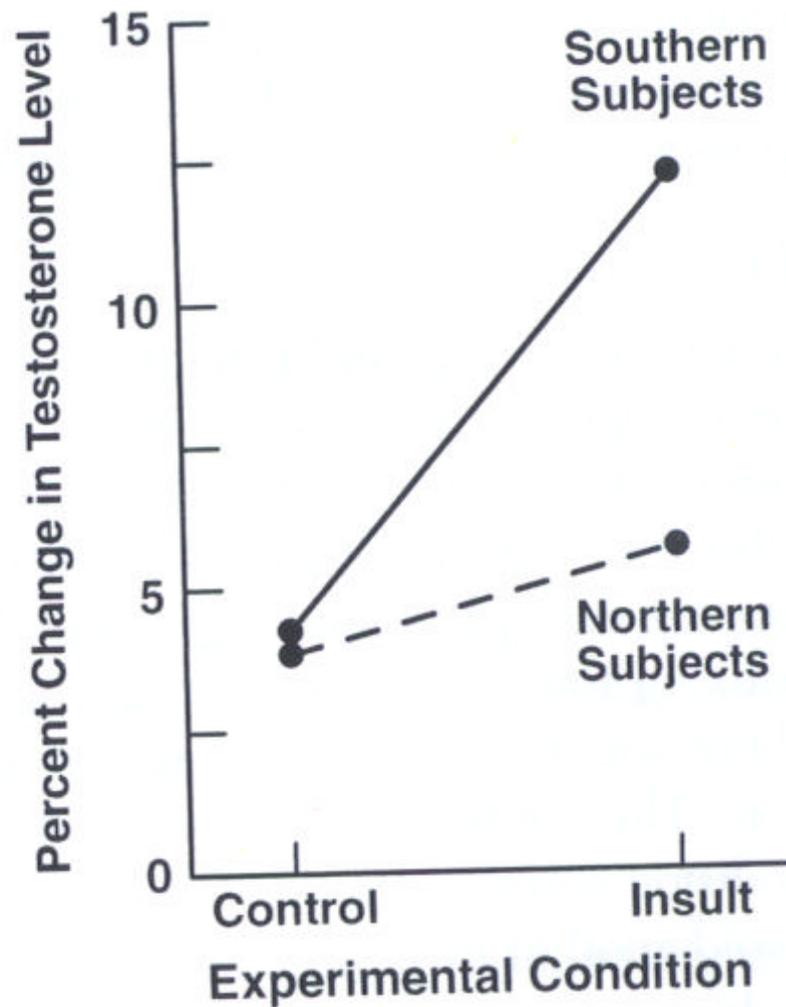
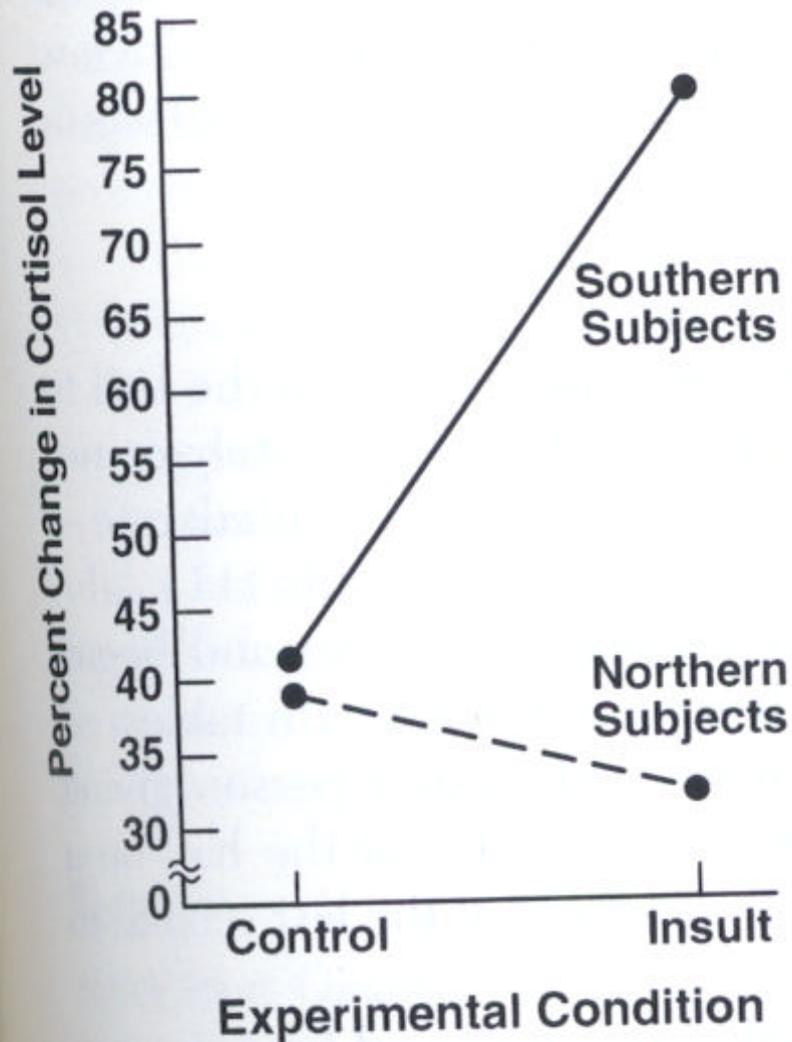


FIGURE 4.2 Change in cortisol levels and change in testosterone levels for insulted and noninsulted southerners and northerners

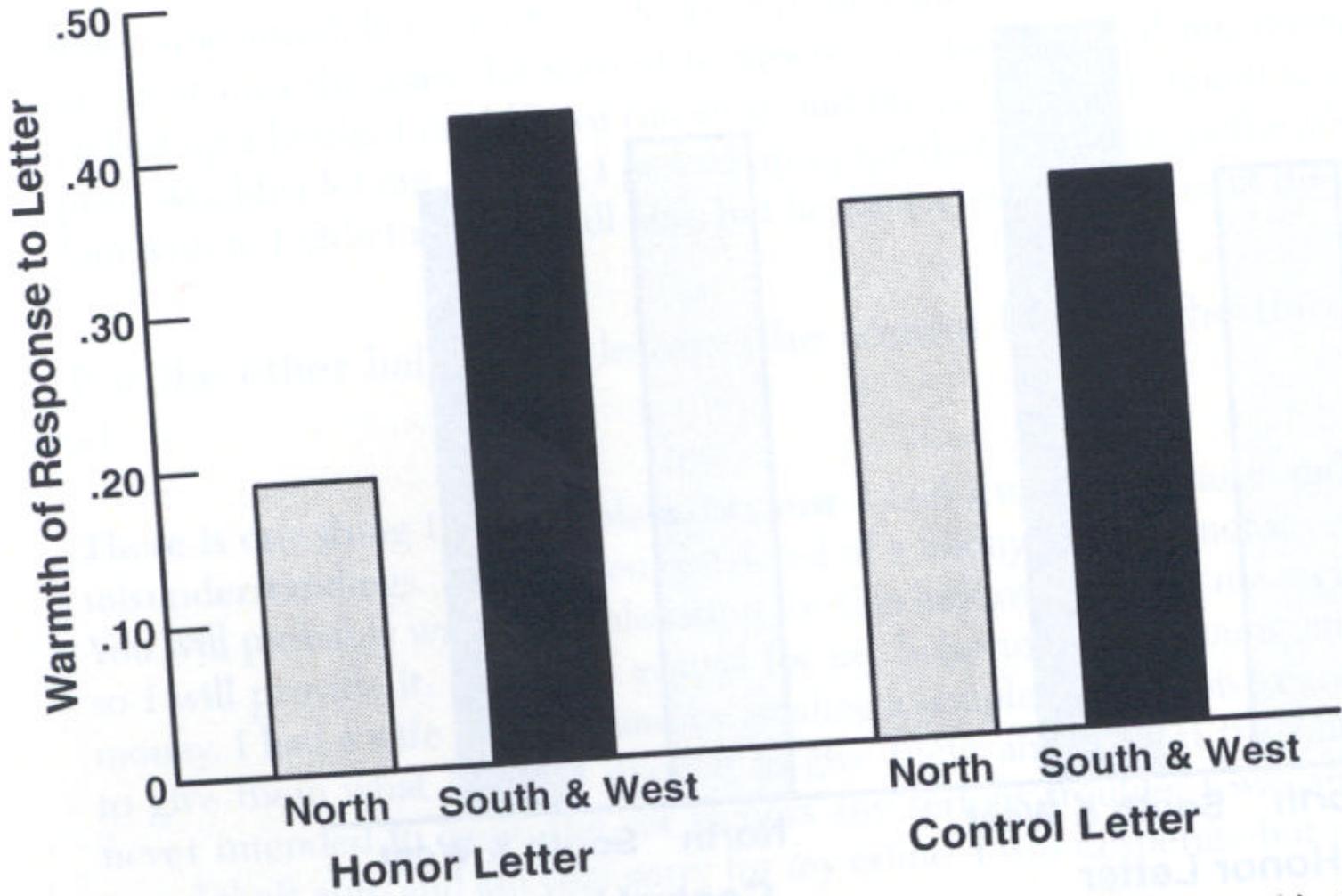


Figure 5.12 Warmth of response to job applicant's letter in the North and in the South and West when he reported an honor-related versus a non-honor-related felony. Source: Cohen and Nisbett, 1995.



Different Paths to Status

- Testosterone appears to increase the motivation towards dominance in men (Mazur & Booth, 1998).
- But if men can satisfy that motivation without violent behavior, they will.
- High testosterone is associated with antisocial behavior most strongly in poorer men, whose paths to success are blocked.

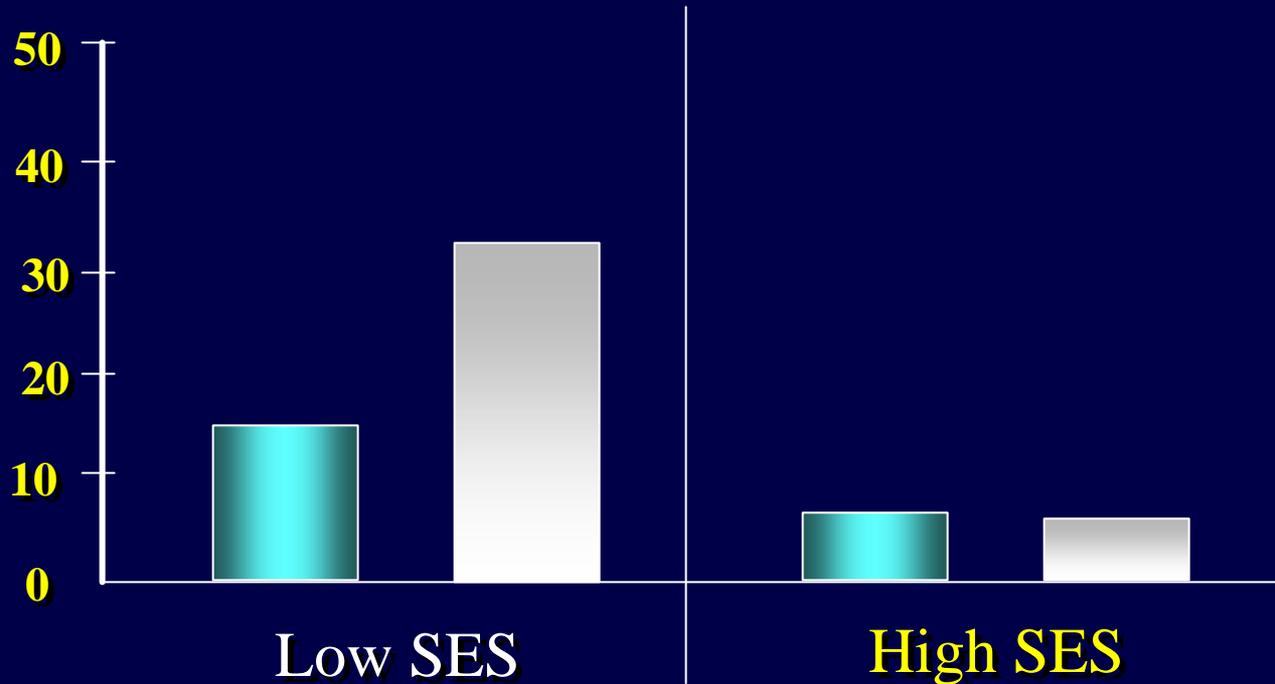


Blocked Pathways to Success

- James Dabbs and Robin Morris searched records of 4,462 U.S. military veterans, now in their 30s and 40s:
- They divided men into those from:
 - relatively low socio-economic status
 - middle and upper class backgrounds.
- And then compared the groups for evidence of antisocial behavior before, during, or after military service.



Percentage
with High
Levels of
Delinquency



 •Normal testosterone

 High testosterone

High testosterone was associated with delinquent behaviors in men of low socio-economic status

But not in men of higher socio-economic status, who presumably had **other paths to attain status**

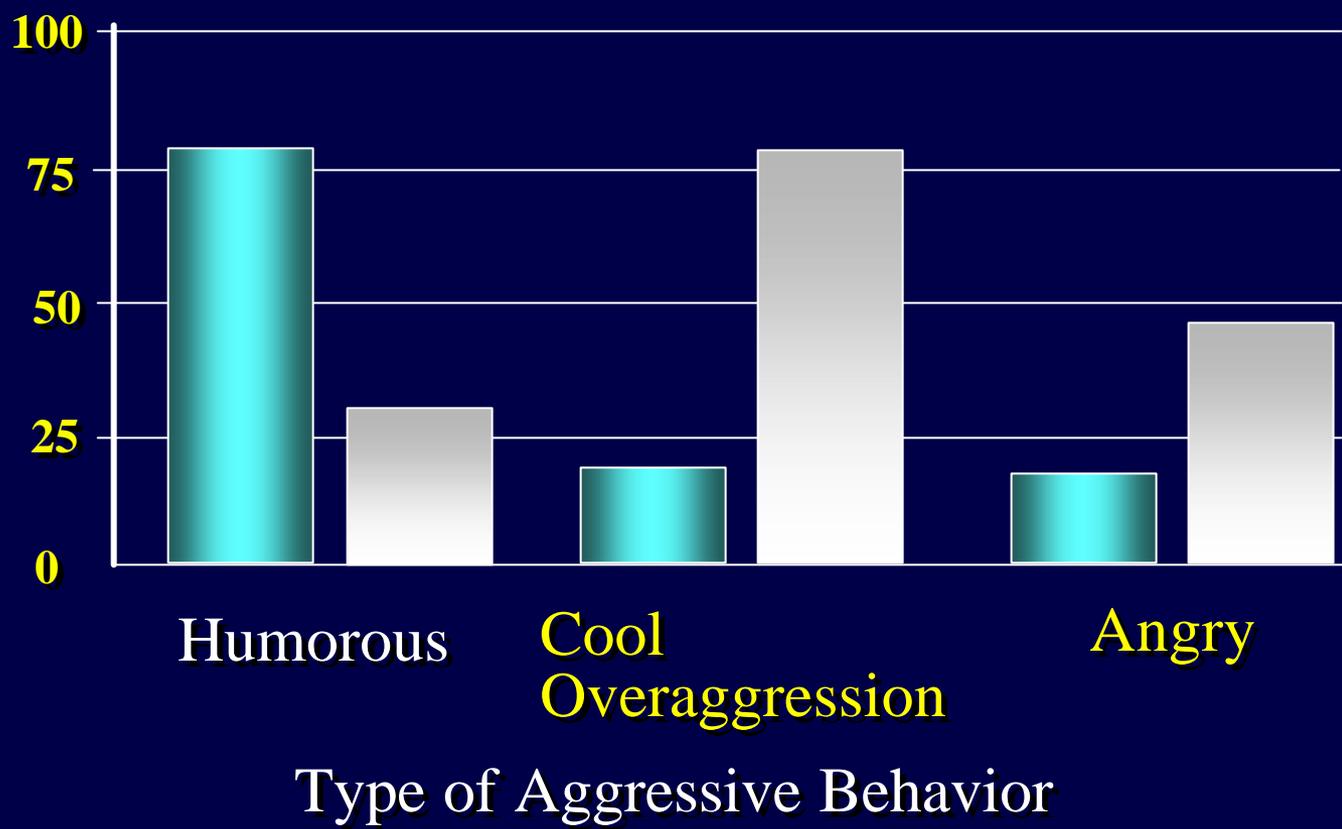


Competition for Mates

- Craig Palmer observed two teams of amateur hockey players in Canada.
 - One team was made up of older, married players.
 - Another was composed of younger, mostly unmarried men.



Percentage of Hockey Games



Older players

Younger players

Aggressive behavior by older, married players was more likely to be humorous.

But younger players hostility was more likely to be cold and instrumental or angry.



Competition for Mates

- The researcher suggested that the pattern of aggression in hockey players is similar to the pattern found in homicides.
- Older men who have attracted mates are in a position to laugh off threats to their relative status.
- For younger men who have not yet established themselves the competition for status is more serious.

Protecting Oneself or Others

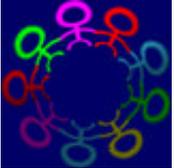
Protecting Oneself or Others

- J. Martin Ramirez (1993) surveyed people in Spain, Finland, and Poland regarding the circumstances under which aggression is justified.
- In all 3 countries, “self-defense” and “protecting others” was at the top of the list.

Protecting Oneself or Others



Self-Defenders



Perceived Threats



Self-Protective Aggression Can
Increase Danger



Self-Defenders

- *Defensive attribution style* – the tendency to notice threats and interpret other people's behavior as intended to do one harm

Social information processing by defensive and non-defensive children

Step

Example of Uncertainty

Search situation for possible threats

Is anyone threatening me now?

Interpret cues

Why did that kid bump me?

Consider possible responses

What should I do about it?

Select a response

Which option will solve the problem?

Carry it out

How do I do what I've decided on?

Non-defensive Child

*Less likely to notice a bump
from another child*

Interpret as *accident*

*Consider peaceful solution
(e.g. joke)*

Likely to *rule out an
aggressive response*

More skilled at carrying out
peaceful options

Defensive Child

*More likely to notice a bump
from another child*

Interpret as *threat*

*Consider violent solution (e.g.,
hitting other)*

Likely to *rule out a peaceful
response*

More skilled at carrying out
aggressive options



Self-protective aggression can increase danger

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found 1 in 5 H.S. students reported carrying a gun to school in preceding month.
 - Adults also often purchase guns for self-defense (Kellerman, et al., 1993).
 - But guns are most often turned against friends, acquaintances, or self.
 - Owning a gun triples chance of being killed (Kellerman, et al., 1993).

Techniques for Reducing Violence

- In general, psychologists feel that punishment may not always be effective in training people to be non-aggressive.

Techniques for Reducing Violence

- Studies comparing homes with and without guns and countries with and without gun control suggest that serious gun-control interventions could result in dramatic decreases in murders and suicides.