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SOME NEW EVIDENCE ON THE SUBCULTURE OF VIOLENCE THESIS

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June 1974

The research reported here was supported in part by funds granted to the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin by the Office of Economic Opportunity pursuant to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Additional funds were provided by the National Institute of Mental Health. The opinions expressed are those of the author.

## ABSTRACT

This paper reviews some of the existing literature bearing on the subculture of violence thesis (Wolfgang, 1958), reports the results of a re-analysis of survey data collected for the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, and presents new data on peer esteem and social psychological correlates of fighting among males in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The paper concludes that although the subculture of violence thesis has not been definitively tested, the weight of the evidence is against it. Areas of concern for future research are also outlined.

VIOLENCE BY BLACKS AND LOW-INCOME WHITES:  
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In the study of adult interpersonal violence (which may be defined as acts of physical aggression directed at persons, excluding acts under the aegis of, or directed against, political, parental, or other authority) one of the most important and most often cited theoretical statements has been the "subculture of violence" thesis (Wolfgang, 1958; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). According to Wolfgang and Ferracuti, violence results from adherence to a set of values that supports and encourages its expression. These values are seen as being in conflict with but not totally in opposition to those of the dominant culture. It is said that within the subculture, various stimuli such as a jostle, a slightly derogatory remark, or the appearance of a weapon in the hands of an adversary are perceived differently than in the dominant culture; in the subculture they evoke a combative reaction.

Although violence obviously is not and cannot be used continuously, Wolfgang and Ferracuti see the requirement to be violent as a norm governing a wide variety of situations. They judge the subcultural theme to be "penetrating and diffuse" and argue that violations of the subcultural norm are punished within the subculture. Adherence to the norm is not necessarily viewed as illicit conduct, and "a carrier and user of violence will [generally] not be burdened by conscious guilt...[and] even law-abiding members of the local subcultural area may not view various expressions of violence as menacing or immoral" (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967:161).

When preparing the 1967 volume, Wolfgang and Ferracuti could locate no data on the distribution of values regarding violence, so they were forced to rely on inferences from available data on criminal acts of interpersonal violence. Since criminal statistics indicate that the groups with the highest rates of homicide are males, nonwhites, lower and working class whites, and young adults, it is therefore among these groups that "we should find in most intense degree a subculture of violence" (1967:153). Wolfgang and Ferracuti acknowledge that their reasoning here is circular, and they agree that individual data on values are necessary for an adequate test of the theory.

In the years since the subculture of violence thesis was first introduced, there have been a variety of studies which directly or indirectly bring data to bear on the thesis. In the study of juvenile delinquency, for example, there has been a related controversy over the content of the value system of adolescent gangs. W. Miller (1958) has argued that these gangs reflect the "focal concerns" of lower class culture, which he sees as including "toughness" and "excitement." However, the analysis of gang values by Short and Strodtbeck failed to confirm the existence of these focal concerns, and a study by Lerman (1968) has questioned the existence of a distinctive lower class culture reflected in gangs. In addition, various studies (e.g., Short and Strodtbeck, 1965; Jansyn, 1966) have concluded that gang activity is related more to group processes than to a lower class value system, and later work by Miller and his colleagues does not indicate that physical aggression is an important part of lower class gang life (Miller, et al., 1961; Miller, 1966).

Some studies, such as those of Kobrin, et al. (1967) and Yablonsky (1962) have found that status within the gang is at least in part based on the criteria outlined by Wolfgang and Ferracuti, but Yablonski has also emphasized the fluid nature of group membership and the limited ability of leaders to sanction members who don't conform. (See also Matza, 1964; Short and Strodtbeck, 1965.) Moreover, it is important to remember that the existence of violence as a criterion of status in gangs in low-income neighborhoods is insufficient to establish the existence of such norms among nongang juveniles in those neighborhoods, especially since it is generally the most extreme gangs that have been studied. When the whole juvenile population is studied, the patterns can be quite different (Hirschi, 1969).

In the study of adult interpersonal violence, research has been much more limited. Various studies and texts in sociology (e.g., Amir, 1971; Clinard, 1973; Schur, 1969) and social psychology (e.g., Akers, 1973; Toch, 1969) have stressed the subcultural view, but they have not used individual data to support their arguments. The idea of a subculture of violence is conspicuous by its absence in various well-known ethnographic studies of adult lower class communities (e.g., Liebow, 1967; Suttles, 1968; Whyte, 1955). Since these writers are not explicitly concerned with the issue, the absence of discussion is not definitive evidence against the thesis. It does, however, suggest that violence is not a major theme in the groups studied.<sup>1</sup>

Few systematic studies of class differences in values or attitudes among adults have been reported in the literature, and some of the most

often cited are quite dated. Most studies that do exist do not specifically deal with low-income groups; the lower class is either omitted or combined with the working class for analysis.<sup>2</sup> Insofar as the present author can determine, until the late 1960s no survey data on the values or attitudes of adults towards violence were available.

In a recent paper, Ball-Rokeach (1973) analyzes responses to the Rokeach Value Survey given by males with various degrees of participation in violence. She finds no important differences in the ranking of eighteen "terminal values" or of eighteen "instrumental values" by men classified as having no, a "moderate," or a "high" degree of participation in violence at any time in their life. She reports that controls for education and income, which are crucial for the examination of a subculture that is said to be class-based, do not affect the findings. There are, however, several difficulties with the indicators of both the independent and dependent variables in that study. The index of "degree of participation in violence" includes both aggression and victimization, is based on the variety rather than the extent of experience, and weights childhood incidents equally with any recent ones. Even if a respondent's aggression were being estimated with some accuracy, the violence may have occurred long before the contemporary value patterns were established. Turning to the dependent variable, it seems that the indicators of values supporting violence are quite weak. "An Exciting Life," "Freedom," "Pleasure," "Social Recognition," being "Courageous" and being "Independent" are taken as indicators of the machismo concept; yet the phrases accompanying each of these value choices suggest a very broad interpretation: "a stimulating and active life;" "independence, free

choice;" "an enjoyable, leisurely life;" "respect, admiration;" "standing up for your beliefs" and being "self-reliant and self-sufficient." Moreover, although the strength of the value hierarchy approach is that it can get at the place of values relating to violence vis a vis other values, the drawback is that the relative ranking is highly dependent on the other values included in the list and on the relative quality of the indicators of the various values.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier data collected for the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in 1968 may be more useful even though it deals with attitudes rather than values. In a national survey, for which questionnaire construction was supervised by Ball-Rokeach, respondents were asked about their general approval of the use of physical aggression in certain kinds of interpersonal interactions; those who gave this general approval were then asked about four or five more specific situations. The general approval questions asked whether there were "any situations that you can imagine" in which the respondent would approve of such acts as a husband slapping his wife's face; a husband shooting his wife; a man punching (or choking) an adult male stranger; one teenage boy punching (or knifing) another. Because these items and their follow-ups are so general, acceptance of them does not imply membership in a subculture of violence. But conversely, it seems reasonable to assume that persons who are in such a subculture would find it quite easy to support many of the items, especially those dealing with relatively low levels of violence. If levels of support in low status groups are relatively low, then the finding can be taken as suggestive evidence contrary to the thesis.<sup>4</sup>



Preliminary analysis of these data has been reported elsewhere (Baker and Ball, 1969; Stark and McEvoy, 1970). The present author has undertaken a detailed analysis of these data, using cross tabulation and multiple regression. This analysis does not alter the basic preliminary findings, which showed an absence of major differences by race or class<sup>5</sup> in approval of interpersonal violence, and in general a low rate of approval. For example, marital fighting is often thought to be a characteristic of the "subculture of violence," but when approval of a husband slapping his wife's face is examined, only 25 percent of white and 37 percent of black married men aged 18-60 say that they can imagine any situation in which they would approve, with no systematic variation by income or education. (There is an age effect, with men over 40 being sharply lower in approval, but it is independent of race, education, or income.) Moreover, both the level of support and the variation by race decrease markedly when follow-up items are examined. A similar pattern is found for items relating to approval of a man choking an adult male stranger, while on items relating to punching an adult male stranger, approval by whites is higher than that by blacks.

Attitudes towards machismo can be gauged by an index made up of items relating to approval of teenage fighting. The items on this index seem to be very easy to support--"Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a teenage boy punching another teenage boy?" If yes, or not sure, "would you approve if he didn't like the other boy?"..."if he had been ridiculed and picked on by the other boy?"..."if he had been challenged by the other boy to a fist fight?"..."if he had been hit by the other boy?" The index was constructed by scoring a yes response to each of

the five items as 2, a not sure as 1, and a no as 0. The range is thus 0-10.

Whites tend to score higher than blacks on this index, and when parents with at least one teenage child are analyzed separately, only 12 percent of black parents, compared to 38 percent of white parents score above six on the ten point index. Among whites, parents with low-income score lower than those with high-income.

If a subculture of violence existed among low status adults, or if low status adults valued the expression of violence among their children, the general trend on this index would be expected to be the reverse of that found, and the rate of support at the high end of the index would have been much higher. The data and conclusions say nothing about the extent of fighting among lower class or black teenagers, and the questions of unintentional socialization through the latent effects of parental behavior, or of socialization to violence by teenage peers remain open. It may well be that lower class or black teenagers are involved in a disproportionate number of fights, and the lower rate of approval by their parents could be a result of the frequency or seriousness of these fights. But such a situation would only support the conclusion that lower class parents in general, and black parents in particular, do not especially like the idea of their children fighting and that teenage fighting is probably not a product of an adult value system emphasizing violence.

#### Some New Data: Peer Esteem and Psychological Correlates of Fighting

In addition to the investigation of verbal support for a "subculture of violence," support and sanction in peer interactions can be examined.

Wolfgang and Ferracuti argue that nonviolent members of a subcultural group are subject to great pressure to conform, that sanction is an integral part of the existence of a norm, and that "alienation of some kind...seems to be a form of punitive action most feasible to this subculture" (1967:160).

It seems to follow that, conversely, persons who adhere to the values would be more likely than those who do not to be liked, respected, and accorded high status in the group. Data from a 1969 survey of black and white males aged 21-64 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, gives some evidence on this point.<sup>6</sup>

Physical aggression is indicated by the item "How often do you get in angry fist fights with other men?" (never, almost never, sometimes, often); perceived esteem accorded by others is indicated by two items, "How do you compare with most men you know on being respected and listened to by other people?" (five point code, from much worse to much better) and "How do you compare with most men you know on being well liked by other people and having lots of friends?" (same code). Since the esteem items are double-barreled, they are less precise than desirable. However they are useful for exploratory purposes.

Because the subcultural hypothesis posits statistical interaction, separate analyses were made for the "lower class" (income less than \$5,000) and "nonpoor" (income over \$5,000) and for blacks and whites. As a result, low-income whites have a small sample size and detailed analysis cannot be carried out for this subsample.

The bottom row of Table 1 shows that the pattern of fighting by race and income group is consistent with the subcultural thesis; blacks are more likely to fight than whites, and the poor are more likely to fight than the nonpoor.<sup>7</sup> (Contrary to expectations, poor whites are more likely to fight

than poor blacks, but the percentage for whites is unstable because of the low N.) However, this pattern is also consistent with several other non-subcultural theories, such as those of Henry and Short (1954), Coser (1963), Gold (1958), or Cloward and Ohlin (1960). The important question here is whether men who fight are accorded (or at least see themselves as being accorded) more esteem by others.

Although the subculture of violence thesis does not make a prediction about the overall association between race or economic status and peer respect or high status among peers, it predicts that the basis of the respect or status will be different in different groups. Subcultural theory would seem to predict a relatively strong positive correlation between the peer esteem item and fighting for low-income blacks, a somewhat smaller (but at least statistically significant) positive correlation for low-income whites and nonpoor blacks,<sup>8</sup> and a relatively strong negative correlation for nonpoor whites.

Table 1 shows the relationship between fighting and perceiving "respect by others," in terms of zero order correlations and as the net effect (beta) of fighting on perceived esteem by others, controlling first for social desirability bias<sup>9</sup> and then for social desirability bias, occupation, and age.<sup>10</sup> The findings are inconsistent with the predictions outlined, with the betas and zero order correlations being either very close to zero or having a sign opposite to that predicted. Table 2 shows the relationship between fighting and perceptions of being "liked by others," in terms of zero order correlations and the net effect of fighting on perceived esteem. Here the findings are somewhat as predicted by subcultural

theory, with low-income blacks and low-income whites showing a positive net effect of fighting on perceived esteem. But the former beta is rather small, and although the latter is larger, neither of them is statistically significant. Moreover, for nonpoor white men, the predicted strong negative correlation does not appear.

Although the findings here do not refute the subculture of violence thesis, taken as a whole they cast doubt on it. To the extent that violence is important to low-income or black men, and to the extent that a subcultural norm is being enforced through ostracism or peer rebuke, we would expect to find a relatively strong positive relationship between fighting and perceived general esteem. Similarly, if a counternorm of nonviolence is important in the white middle class, a strong negative relationship should have been found. Overall the data here are not consistent with this predicted pattern, and if we take statistical significance as a minimal criteria of support, none of the predictions of subcultural theory are supported. It is possible, of course, that the available indicators mask the relationships predicted. For example, perhaps responses to fighting draw approval or rebuke as predicted but these responses do not affect the overall evaluation perceived by the violent person. In this case, however, we would have to conclude that violence is not as important to the subculture as hypothesized, for as the sanction gets stronger--e.g., ostracism--consequences for general esteem should follow.

As a corollary to the analysis of violence and esteem, the relationship between violence and feeling of well-being can be examined. One competing theory to the subculture of violence thesis is that violence is the product of some sort of psychological disorder. The subcultural approach

posits, by contrast, that violence is normal behavior and is the product of normal group processes. Similarly, the subcultural thesis posits that violent people do not feel guilty about their actions. An empirical inquiry could examine psychiatric records or administer various personality tests (see, e.g., Ferracuti, Lazzari, and Wolfgang, 1970); alternatively, various measures of psychological adjustment can be included in an interview schedule or questionnaire. One such measure is an index of happiness which can be constructed from items in the Milwaukee survey.<sup>11</sup> It would seem that outside the subculture men who are violent would be less likely to be happy than would nonviolent men, both because they were receiving negative sanctions for their violence and because in this group it would be the more marginal men who would be violent. By contrast, within the subculture, happiness would be positively correlated with violence, since violence is posited as not being a pathological condition and since nonviolent men are hypothesized to be negatively sanctioned. Table 3 shows that fighting is negatively correlated with happiness for all four subgroups, and (statistically) significantly so for blacks. Except for nonpoor whites, these findings run directly counter to the predictions of the subcultural thesis. And even for nonpoor whites, the finding of a correlation even less negative than for blacks can also be considered evidence contrary to the thesis.<sup>12</sup>

#### DISCUSSION

Although much suggestive evidence on the subculture of violence exists, there is a clear need for further research in this area. Methodologically, this research should be designed so that there is adequate representation of minorities and of poor whites for analysis, and it should

make some attempt to cover both "streetcorner men" and more traditional householders (cf. Hannerz, 1969). A major limitation of existing survey data is that they are based only on persons in households (cf. Parsons, 1972). Another is that the surveys do not have concentrated samples in a given neighborhood. These difficulties are alleviated, but not erased, by the data from the field studies.

Substantively, work needs to be done on establishing the pervasiveness of a subculture. It seems that for a trait to be termed subcultural, a large majority of the presumed participants in the subculture should exhibit it in some way, as contrasted to a minority of nonparticipants. This criterion may seem stringent, but it seems to follow directly from the way in which subcultures are generally discussed. In such discussions, social groups are characterized as being basically different from one another. For example, Wolfgang and Ferracuti write of quick resort to physical combat as a "cultural expression" for "lower socio-economic males," and contrasts this to "the upper-middle and upper social class value system" (1967:153).

Often, although summary statements may characterize social groups as having substantially different values, the author has something more limited in mind. For example, although Wolfgang and Ferracuti seem to imply that the subculture of violence defines the prevailing set of values for low-income and nonwhite young men, they may simply mean that insofar as the subculture exists, it is found predominantly in these groups. This concept could be operationalized as the existence of minority sentiment within a given demographic group, as compared to a virtual absence in other groups.

A more limited criterion that is sometimes used for deciding that a group has a subcultural value system is the existence of a statistically significant but relatively small difference in support for the values in the subgroup as compared to the dominant group. However, it seems incorrect to characterize such a subculture as being located in the demographic group with greater support for the value, or to characterize that demographic group as a subculture. Rather, the subculture would have to be defined as the group of people who hold the value, irrespective of their demographic group. Also, as Rodman (1963) suggests, this case might be better understood as one of a variation on a common cultural theme, not as a tension between the values of a dominant culture and a subculture. Of course, even if such a difference is not considered subcultural, it may still be descriptively interesting and important in the explanation of violence.

These differences in the pervasiveness of subcultures have important implications for the public imagery of social groups. In the case of the subculture of violence, if class or racial groups can in fact be characterized as being different (or if findings are presented as though they could), popular conceptions of widespread pathology among nonwhites and low-income whites would be supported. By contrast the existence of a subculture within a class or racial group, or of value differences that are statistically significant but not large, would be more consonant with the view that there is wide variation in the values, needs, and problems of the poor and of nonwhites.

Future research should also focus more closely on the precise content of any subcultural differences.<sup>13</sup> It is possible, for example, that rather than a "subculture of violence," something like a "subculture of



masculinity" exists, with violence being only one of many possible outlets, and not necessarily the preferred one. In this case, violence may result from the blocking of alternative opportunities to exhibit "machismo." (Cf. Miller, 1966.) Another possibility is that the use of liquor may be part of a broader social configuration that generates situations conducive to violence. A value system that sanctions or even encourages either drunken brawls or wild behavior on certain special occasions would not necessarily be the same as one that requires "quick resort to physical combat as a measure of daring, courage, or defense of status" in everyday interaction.<sup>14</sup>

Conceptually, one distinction that must be more explicitly made in future research is that between the use of subculture as a descriptive, intervening, or explanatory, variable. When the term is used descriptively, all that need be meant is that a high value is placed on violence and that this value is relevant to the determination of behavior in at least some situations. Many discussions of subcultures work at this level, positing that a subculture exists and discussing its content, but not giving the subculture a specific place in a theoretical framework.

When theoretical frameworks have been offered in sociology, the subculture has most often been seen as an intervening variable between structural processes and behavior. The policy implication is that a change in structure is necessary to effect a lasting change in behavior. In the study of violence, perhaps the best known theory of this type is that of Cloward and Ohlin (1960).

In contrast to this type of formulation, a theory may place primary emphasis on the subculture itself, rather than on social structure. This

model holds that the major source of change must be within the subculture; without resocialization, structural change will have little effect. In recent years this approach has been under much attack, and many writers including Banfield (1968), Lewis (e.g., 1966b), and Moynihan (1965) have been challenged by critics who believed these writers were inappropriately using the concept of subculture in an explanatory manner. (See, e.g., Valentine, 1968.) These assertions have generally been denied (see, e.g., Lewis, et al., 1969), but the controversy still rages. This controversy is important to scholarly consideration of the concept of subculture because of the tendency of writers to discuss subcultures descriptively. Descriptive discussions are by their nature more likely to be roughly accurate, but the problem is that the descriptive use of the term too easily slips into the explanatory use, either by the writer's implications or the reader's inferences (cf. Liebow, 1971). This problem and its consequences are very real, especially when members of groups of low social status are the subject of analysis.

An example of the different approaches and their concomitant policy implications may be seen in the work of Wolfgang and Ferracuti. At some points Wolfgang and Ferracuti seem to use the concept as either a descriptive or intervening variable. For example, they state that they are "not prepared to assert how a subculture of violence arises" (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967:163) and discuss in some detail various structural arguments such as that of Cloward and Ohlin as reasonable possibilities. At other points, however, Wolfgang and Ferracuti see the subculture as essentially a stable entity relatively independent of the structural processes of the dominant society, i.e., they view it in the explanatory sense. It

is this point of view that seems to inform their policy recommendations, which call for intervention and resocialization:

Before one set of values can replace another, before the subculture of violence can be substituted by the establishment of non-violence, the former must be disrupted, dispersed, and discouraged....Once the subculture is disintegrated by the dispersion of its members, aggressive attitudes are not supported by like-minded companions...(1967:300).

It seems clear then, that the analytical status of the concept of subculture is very important, and future statements should be more sensitive to the different possibilities and their policy implications. A critical issue for both theory and policy is whether a change in life circumstances would be likely to bring a shift in values or lifestyle. In any given research, the strength or permanence of values will be difficult to assess. But in most cases an assessment of relative importance can be made; it is this relative importance, not an absolute culture versus structure statement, which is necessary.

#### CONCLUSION

Although the subculture of violence thesis has received a certain measure of acceptance in the field, a wide variety of evidence suggests that the thesis is incorrect. All of the data available have limitations of various sorts, and the thesis cannot be said to have been definitively tested. On balance, however, more of available evidence is inconsistent with the thesis than consistent with it.

At this time we do not know how important a deviant value system is in explaining violence in the United States,<sup>15</sup> and, if it exists, we do not know whether such a value system can be said to be predominantly found within the black or low-income white communities or whether it can be said to be relatively independent of social structure. But the subculture of violence thesis has an impact beyond its relevance to the study of violence, in that it is possible to interpret it as implying that blacks and low-income whites, as groups, can be characterized as having a commitment to violence. There does seem to be enough evidence to conclude that these groups are in general not substantially different from the dominant society in their rate of approval of the use of physical aggression. This conclusion, along with a growing empirical literature on other aspects of the lives of poor and black (and other minority) persons in the United States, is compatible with the view that the social and economic deprivations experienced by members of these groups are primarily the result of social structural factors, rather than the product of group pathology (cf. Elesh and McCarthy, 1973; Goodwin, 1972; Kriesberg, 1970; Shiller, 1973). The policy implications involve a recognition of the competence of the vast majority of members of these groups, and an emphasis on the broadening of opportunity for education, employment, and redress of grievances, rather than on analysis of problems and treatments developed by benevolent outsiders.

## NOTES

1. One anthropological study that does recount many violent incidents is Lewis's (1966a) biography of the Rios family in Puerto Rico and New York. But although a degree of machismo is clearly present, violence is often criticized by the family. Most of the family members feel hurt by the violence and deprivation they experienced as children, and many resolve to do better with their children. In an earlier discussion of poverty in Mexico, Lewis (1961) lists "frequent resort to violence" as an element of the culture of poverty, while in La Vida (1966) he talks more generally of lack of impulse control. In neither case does he say that the culture requires acts of violence.
  
2. One relevant study that combines class data in this way is Schneider and Lysgaard's (1953) work on the "deferred gratification pattern." Although the findings of class differences are open to criticism (see Miller et al., 1965), note that at any rate the differences in the use of physical violence were small and were considered unimpressive by the authors.
  
3. Chapman and Chapman argue that these are classic problems in research on the ranking of performance on various tasks. Their work (1974, ch. 3-4) discusses the problems in depth (in a different research context) and makes some proposals for their alleviation.
  
4. Of course, this does not mean that a person's response to the general item directly indicates his attitude or action in some actual instance he

may become (or have been) involved in.

5. Social class is indicated by income and education. Occupational data were not coded.

6. The data are from an ongoing study of correlates of self-esteem directed by Russell Middleton (sponsored by the National Science Foundation); I am grateful to him for permission to analyze and report the relationships presented here. The interviews were conducted by the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory and respondents and interviewers were matched by race. An area probability sample for the Milwaukee city limits was used.

7. The differences by class and race reported for the samples here are somewhat larger than those found on items in the Violence Commission survey, which asked retrospectively about acts of physical aggression. See Baker and Ball (1969) or Stark and McEvoy (1970).

8. An alternative prediction would be that, because of strong norms against violence among the "black bourgeoisie" the correlation between violence and esteem would be negative at least for those nonpoor blacks in white collar jobs.

9. "Social desirability bias" is indicated by a five-item adaptation of Douglas Crowne and David Marlowe's (1964) scale, which includes items which are either socially desirable but probably untrue or probably true but socially undesirable. (E.g., True or False: "I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.") of the five items, three were worded such that agreement was socially desirable, and two worded such that disagreement was socially desirable. Respondents scoring high on this

scale are somewhat more likely to report that they do not get in fights and that they are held in high esteem by others.

10. Both occupation and age were indicated by sets of dummy variables. For occupation, the categories were white collar, blue collar, farm; for age they were 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-64.

11. The items were these: "On the whole, how happy would you say you are now?" "On the whole, how happy would you say you are now compared with other men you know?" "How often do you feel very discouraged and depressed?" "How often do you get the feeling that life is not worth living?" Each item had four possible responses.

12. Because of the uncertain direction of causation, partial correlation coefficients may be a more appropriate measure of association here than regression coefficients. However, use of partial  $r$ 's would not have changed the findings.

13. This can probably best be done by beginning with relatively unstructured in-depth interviews with informants. A move in this direction is made by Toch (1969), who conducted intensive interviews with both convicts and policemen who had frequently engaged in assault. But even here the subcultural thesis is drawn from the literature rather than grounded in the accounts of those interviewed.

14. Similar considerations hold for the question of the existence of a subculture of violence in the American South. Many writers have noted the quite disproportionately high rate of homicide in the South, and recently Gastil (1971), Hackney (1969) and Reed (1972) have argued that this

divergence can be explained by regional differences in the acceptability of violence. But again, the exact content of the hypothesized subculture is generally unclear, and data do not support the application of the subculture of violence thesis to the South (Erlanger, 1974).

15. This paper does not address Wolfgang and Ferracuti's contention that a subculture of violence exists in Colombia, Sardinia, Mexico, Albania, and Albanova, Italy. The case of Sardinia is explored in more detail in Ferracuti et al. (1970), who find some evidence in support of the hypothesis but concludes that "the subculture of violence in Sardinia is limited to violent offenders" (1970:110). This suggests that although it may be that violent offenders in Sardinia receive support for their actions from a limited group, Sardinia itself cannot be characterized as embracing a subculture of violence.



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Table 1  
 EFFECT OF FIGHTING ON FEELING "RESPECTED AND  
 LISTENED TO BY OTHERS"  
 By Race and Income, with Controls  
 Milwaukee Men, Aged 21-64, 1969

Hypothesized Relation	White			Black		
	<\$5,000	≥\$5,000	Total	<\$5,000	≥\$5,000	Total
	Positive	strong Neg.		Strong Pos.	Positive	
Zero order r	-.15	.02		-.25	-.18*	
beta, net of social desirability index (SDI)	-.05	.02		-.22	-.18*	
beta, net of SDI, occupation and age	a	.08		.02	-.14	
(N)	(15)	(207)	(222)	(51)	(184)	(235)
% who fight	47%	19%	21%	39%	29%	31%

<sup>a</sup>Because of small sample size this coefficient cannot be computed.

NB \* Indicates beta significant at .05 or better.



Table 2  
 EFFECT OF FIGHTING ON FEELING "WELL LIKED BY OTHER  
 PEOPLE AND HAVING LOTS OF FRIENDS"  
 By Race and Income, with Controls  
 Milwaukee Men, Aged 21-64, 1969

Hypothesized Relation	White		Black	
	<\$5,000	≥\$5,000	<\$5,000	≥ \$5,000
	Positive	Strong Neg.	Strong Pos.	positive
Zero order r	.22	-.01	-.12	-.01
beta, net of social desirability index (SDI)	.21	-.01	-.09	-.01
beta, net of SDI, occupation and age	a	-.03	.16	-.04
(N)	(15)	(207)	(51)	(184)

<sup>a</sup>Because of small sample size this coefficient cannot be computed.

NB None of the coefficients in the table are significant at .05 or better.

Table 3  
 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIGHTING AND HAPPINESS  
 By Race and Income, with Controls  
 Milwaukee Men, Aged 21-64, 1969

Hypothesized Relation	White		Black	
	<\$5,000	≥ \$5,000	<\$5,000	≥ \$5,000
	Positive	Strong Neg.	Strong Pos.	Positive
Zero order r	-.09	-.07	-.36*	-.19*
Partial r, net of social desirability index (SDI)	.08	-.07	-.33*	-.19*
Partial r, net of SDI, occupation and age	a	-.09	-.30*	-.18*
(N)	(15)	(207)	(51)	(184)

<sup>a</sup>Because of small sample size this coefficient cannot be computed.

NB \* Indicates beta significant at .05 or better.