

Domestic Violence and Social Time*

Donald Black

Professor emérito da University of Virginia, EUA

Recebido em: 09/06/2017

Aprovado em: 21/11/2017

A violência doméstica é o uso da força entre parceiros que vivem juntos como um casal. A maioria é uma forma de gestão de conflitos conhecida como autoajuda: o tratamento de uma queixa com agressão. Em **Violência doméstica e tempo social** eu introduzo dois princípios de violência doméstica que explicam 1) quais casais têm mais violência e 2) o que causa sua violência. O primeiro princípio - *a violência doméstica é uma função direta da distância doméstica* - explica por que algumas estruturas domésticas (como "patriarquias frias") têm mais violência do que outras (como "democracias estreitas"). O segundo princípio - *a violência doméstica é uma função direta do movimento do tempo doméstico* - explica casos particulares de violência doméstica com mudanças (como diminuição da intimidade ou aumento da desigualdade) nas relações domésticas onde elas ocorrem. Esses princípios explicam a violência doméstica nas sociedades tradicionais e modernas, entre homens e mulheres, e em casais heterossexuais e do mesmo sexo.

Palavras-chave: violência doméstica, conflito, tempo social, teoria sociológica, sociologia pura

Domestic violence is the use of force between partners who live together as a couple. Most is a form of conflict management known as self-help: the handling of a grievance with aggression. Here I introduce two principles of domestic violence that explain 1) which couples have more violence and 2) what causes their violence. The first principle - *domestic violence is a direct function of domestic distance* - explains why some domestic structures (such as "cold patriarchies") have more violence than others (such as "close democracies"). The second principle - *domestic violence is a direct function of the movement of domestic time* - explains particular cases of domestic violence with changes (such as decreases of intimacy or increases of inequality) in the domestic relationships where they occur. These principles explain domestic violence in traditional and modern societies, by men and women, and in heterosexual and same-sex couples.

Keywords: domestic violence, conflict, social time, sociological theory, pure sociology

- A man learns that his wife is leaving him, and beats her to death with a baseball bat.
- After a woman criticizes her boyfriend for using drugs and drinking too much, he tells her to mind her own business and punches her in the face.
- A woman wants her lesbian partner to stay home instead of going out to dinner with friends, and soon they are fighting and throwing things at each other.
- A woman discovers that her husband is having a sexual affair with another woman, and shoots him in the head after he goes to sleep.

* I first presented the ideas in this essay in a session called "Crime and Social Time: Criminological Applications of Black's New Theory" at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Washington, D. C., November 19, 2015. I also included some of the ideas in a lecture entitled "Violence and Moral Time" for a session on "Theorizing Violence and Peace-Making" at a conference called "Social Interaction and Theory: A Conference in Honor of Professor Randall Collins" at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, April 7, 2016. For help of various kinds, I thank Rae Blumberg, Mark Cooney, Jason Manning, Martin Schwartz, Roberta Senechal de la Roche, Evan Stark, and Bradford Wilcox.

Violence is the use of force. It might inflict pain and injury, but also includes any plan, threat, or attempt to use force. It ranges from restraining a rambunctious child or playing a rough-and-tumble game to beating, raping, torturing, shooting, bombing, and genocide. Its target might be human or non-human. And most is moralistic – a form of justice. It is self-help: the handling of a grievance with aggression. Most violence thus belongs to the same sociological family as law and other kinds of conflict management (see BLACK, 1990; 2004a).¹

Domestic violence is the use of force between partners who live together as a couple. Although a crime in modern societies and labeled with such terms as “intimate partner abuse” and “wife beating,” most domestic violence is also self-help – a way to handle conflict about right and wrong (see BLACK, 1983; PETERSON, 1999; MICHALSKI, 2004). It might include pushing, grabbing, squeezing, shaking, slapping, striking, beating, biting, scratching, kicking, burning, choking, cutting, stabbing, and shooting – or damaging property, such as tearing clothing, smashing furniture, bashing doors, and breaking windows. Present in nearly all known societies, domestic violence is surely the most common species of violence in human life.²

Here I introduce a theory of domestic violence designed to answer the following questions: 1) Where in social space is domestic violence more frequent and severe? 2) What causes it? We shall see that domestic violence occurs in different amounts in different domestic structures. The closest couples have the least, and the most distant couples have the most. And we shall see that the fundamental cause of domestic violence is the movement of social time in a domestic relationship – a fluctuation of social space – such as a change in intimacy or inequality between the partners (see generally BLACK, 2011). Most domestic violence results specifically from a movement of *domestic time* – a change in *domestic space*, the social geometry of a domestic relationship.

Domestic Space

All couples are close, but some are closer than others. Various social distances separate the partners to a greater or lesser degree (see BROUDE, 2003). One dimension of domestic space is the *relational distance* between the partners: their degree of intimacy – how much they participate in one another’s lives, such as how much time they spend together, how long they have done so, how much they do together, how much they reveal about themselves to one another, and how much they contribute to one another’s daily life. Some couples spend nearly all their waking hours together and share virtually every element of their lives; others live in largely separate worlds and have little contact from one day to the next.

Another dimension of domestic space is the *functional distance* between the partners: the degree of similarity of their activities. Modern couples sometimes engage in the same work and share household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and child care, while others pursue almost entirely different activities from one day to another.

A third dimension of domestic space is *cultural distance*: the degree to which the partners are separated by cultural differences, such as ethnic or religious differences. Although most couples are culturally close in most respects, heterosexual partners usually differ to some degree in their style of dress, body decoration, and other elements of gender.³

Fourth and finally, a greater or lesser degree of *vertical distance* – inequality – might separate the partners. One partner might control the couple’s economic resources, for example, or exercise domestic authority over the other. Or they might be largely equal. But even when otherwise equal, one partner (usually the man in heterosexual couples) might have a superior level of physical power (such as greater size, strength, access to weapons, and fighting skill).

Four Domestic Structures

Next I describe four domestic structures with different amounts of domestic distance between the partners: the close democracy, loose anarchy, soft hierarchy, and cold patriarchy. Each is a pure type, and couples in the real world might not always fit neatly within a single category. And although most of my examples describe heterosexual couples, the typology is applicable to same-sex couples as well (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Four Domestic Structures

		Domestic distance	
		Low	High
Domestic inequality	Low	close democracy	loose anarchy
	High	soft hierarchy	cold patriarchy

Domestic distance = relational, functional, and cultural distance between the partners.

Domestic inequality = social superiority of one partner over the other.

The domestic structure with the least social distance between the partners is a *close democracy*. Sometimes known as a “modern marriage” in the United States and other Western societies, such couples spend nearly all their time together and share nearly every feature of their lives on a daily

basis. Increasingly found among modern professionals (such as physicians, lawyers, and professors), in the purest examples the partners have the same occupation and place of work, the same social life and leisure activities, and little division of domestic labor. Although they might divide some household work (such as cooking and cleaning), the partners also share many responsibilities (such as childcare and shopping). Typically they are culturally close as well. And they are largely equal, jointly contributing to the household economy and deciding the course of their daily lives in the manner of a consensual democracy, neither dominating the other. Such partners often describe each other as their “best friend,” but actually they are closer than most friends.

At the opposite extreme from a close democracy is a *cold patriarchy*, with so much inequality and other social distance separating the partners that some Westerners might find it surprising that such couples exist at all. Yet cold patriarchies have long been the most common domestic structure in such parts of the world as North Africa, the Middle East, and South and East Asia, including the Arab world and such countries as Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and China. Partners in a cold patriarchy live almost entirely separate lives. The husband spends most of his time beyond the household (typically with other men), controls the economic resources, and seeks to be the absolute dictator over his wife and children. The wife spends her time in the home doing domestic labor such as cooking, childcare, and cleaning. The partners share little more than an ethnic culture, their family, and sexual intimacy.

The cold patriarchy is the typical domestic structure of the Pashtun tribe of Pakistan and Afghanistan – who have a saying that “husband is another name for God” (LINDHOLM, 1982, p. 145).⁴ A Pashtun wife must have her husband’s permission to leave their home (normally given only on special occasions such as weddings and funerals), must be accompanied by a man when in public, and must cover herself when away from home in a tent-like garment (*burqa*) that hides her body and most of her face. Traditional Pashtun husbands sleep in the village “men’s house,” and spend time at home mainly to eat their meals and have sexual contact with their wife (though nowadays most Pashtun men sleep in their own home). Some husbands openly entertain prostitutes or have other sexual relationships without any outward objection from their wives. But in most cases a wife knows little or nothing about her husband’s daily activities beyond their home, has no right to know, and should not ask (Idem, p. 220).

Pashtun men “ignore women altogether whenever possible” and avoid acknowledging their presence or even mentioning them among themselves (Idem). Men and boys wear better clothing than women and girls, and eat better food in a separate area of the house. And husbands demand total domination over their wives – by brute force if necessary (Idem, p. 173). A wife’s position in the household is thus akin to that of a domestic animal. As Pashtun men sometimes say: “Our

women make bread and produce children. They need do no more. They are like cows in their stalls” (Idem, p. 163).

In Egypt where the cold patriarchy also prevails, one low-income woman described her lack of intimacy with her husband (Mustafa): “Truly, Mustafa is like a stranger from the street. This is the way of our ‘marriage’: He comes home at night, asks for food, (...) eats, and goes straight to bed. (...) He is more remote even than a hotel guest. Hotel guests at least greet you and engage in polite conversation. But Mustafa never says a word about his experiences” (WIKAN, 1996, pp. 93-94; see also p. 29). They also sleep in separate beds. In an Egyptian couple of this kind, even sexual intercourse is remarkably distant: It includes no kisses, caresses, or other gestures of intimacy, nor does the woman undress or allow herself to be undressed to reveal her naked body to her husband (Idem, pp. 47; 58).

Between the closest and most distant domestic structures (close democracies and cold patriarchies) are the *loose anarchy* and *soft hierarchy*. Although loose anarchies have little or no domestic inequality, they normally are not as equal as close democracies, nor are they as close as close democracies in other respects. But they are not as distant as cold patriarchies, either. In modern societies such as the United States few partners with a loose anarchy are formally married, and some even begin sharing a dwelling when they are only superficially acquainted. While sociologists might describe them as “cohabitating” or as having an “informal” or “common-law” marriage, the partners would more likely say that they “live together,” that one is “staying with the other,” or merely that they are “friends” (see LIEBOW, 1967, Chs. 4-5; GOFFMAN, 2014, p. 230).

Many low-income American couples, especially African-Americans, are loose anarchies. The domestic relationship between low-income African-Americans often has such a short life expectancy and changes so frequently that their domestic pattern is sometimes described as “serial monogamy” (see, e.g., SIMON and BURNS, 1997, pp. 230-236). A similar pattern is not uncommon among low-income Puerto-Rican Americans and the Appalachian white Americans known as “hill people” or “hillbillies” (BOURGOIS, 1995, p. 315; VANCE, 2016). Yet to speak of “monogamy” or a “household” might overstate the closeness of some of these domestic relationships – if they are even close enough to be called “domestic” (see, e.g., GOFFMAN, 2014, pp. 100-105; 116-122; 168; 228). For example, one African-American woman said she began living with a man (Odell) the same night they met, after she asked him to buy her some “crack” (a form of cocaine that can be smoked):

I met Odell. I was like, I could get with a little one-night stand, put him out the house, and it would be all over with. Actually I was looking at him [to] go get some dope. Odell didn’t even smoke dope, still don’t. He ain’t never. After that I made love to Odell, and he hasn’t left yet (POTTER, 2008, p. 139).

Partners with a loose anarchy spend less time together and share fewer activities than do those with a close democracy. Even if both are unemployed they typically have different daily activities (apart from a possible shared involvement in drugs or other illicit activities) (see, e.g., RICHIE, 1996, p. 150). African-American men often obtain considerable economic support from women, living in their dwellings and subsisting on their food and other resources while assuming few if any domestic responsibilities of their own (see LIEBOW, 1967, Ch. 5; RICHIE, 1996, pp. 72-73; 75; POTTER, 2008, pp. 100-102; EDIN, 2000). Some Puerto-Rican American men involved in illegal drugs are likewise “merely parasites on their girlfriends’ resources” (BOURGOIS, 1995, p. 316). Partners with a loose anarchy might be significantly independent of one another, however, possibly because one or both can turn to relatives or friends for financial or other support when needed (see, e.g., STACK, 1974).⁵

Couples in some tribal societies have a loose anarchy as well. For example, domestic relationships among the traditional Cherokee of southeastern North America are so informal and unstable that their language has no words for “husband” and “wife” (REID, 1970, p. 121). A Cherokee domestic relationship begins when a man moves into a woman’s dwelling, and ends when he leaves and goes elsewhere. A woman ends her relationship with a man by “putting him out or taking another man in his place” (Idem, p. 117). Some Cherokee change domestic partners as many as “three or four times a year” (Idem). The Buid of the Philippine highlands also have a loose anarchy. The partners are “autonomous equals,” and their “most common type of dispute is divorce” (GIBSON, 1989, p. 66). They average about five marriages in a lifetime, and ten marriages by a single individual are “by no means uncommon” (Idem, 1986, p. 78).

Soft hierarchies have more domestic inequality than close democracies and loose anarchies, but not as much as cold patriarchies. Nor are they as close as close democracies. In the modern Western world, partners with a soft hierarchy are sometimes said to have a “traditional marriage,” partly because they are usually married in a formal ceremony. The husband normally provides most if not all of their economic resources, while the wife assumes responsibility for most domestic work such as cooking, childcare, and cleaning. Some same-sex partners in modern societies have a soft hierarchy as well (see, e.g., RENZETTI, 1992, pp. 43-55).

Soft hierarchies are also found in tribal societies. Among the Utku Eskimos (Utkuhikhalingmiut Inuit) of the Canadian Northwest, for instance, husbands exercise authority over their wives (such as by telling them when and how they should perform various tasks), but couples nevertheless display a significant degree of closeness. Utku women “do not feel beleaguered by the demands of their men,” and instead speak of “wanting to help” their husbands – whom they regard as having “the hardest work to do, going out in the coldest weather to fish or hunt, and

making long, difficult sled trips under the most adverse conditions.” As one woman remarked, wives “want to do what we can to help [our husbands] because they take care of us” (BRIGGS, 1970, pp. 107-108). Among the Jívaro of Ecuador, husbands likewise “dominate” their wives, but in other respects couples have considerable closeness. For example, wives might voluntarily accompany and help their husbands on hunting trips – which both enjoy, partly because it allows them to be alone together in the jungle and to have sexual relations in complete privacy (HARNER, 1972, pp. 79-82).⁶

The Geometry of Domestic Violence

The amount of domestic violence varies across the four domestic structures described above. More distant domestic structures are more violent: Both the frequency and severity of domestic violence increase with the social distance, including inequality, between the partners. Thus my first principle of domestic violence:

Domestic violence is a direct function of domestic distance.

This principle explains many known facts about domestic violence in the United States and elsewhere, including the greater amount of domestic violence between partners who live together without being formally married, between those who have shared a dwelling for shorter periods of time, between those whose dwelling is owned by the man, and between those whose other economic resources are controlled by the man (see respectively MICHALSKI, 2004, pp. 665-667; 2005, pp. 632-633; LEVINSON, 1989, Ch. 5; see also DOBASH and DOBASH, 1979, Ch. 3.) It also explains why low-income African-American couples (who often have a loose anarchy) have more domestic violence than higher-income African-American couples and white American couples (see, e.g., RICHIE, 1996, especially pp. 81-100; JOHNSON and FERRARO, 2000, p. 953; POTTER, 2008, pp. 91-92). And it explains why the cold patriarchy is the most violent domestic structure while the close democracy is the least violent domestic structure.⁷

Pashtun couples reportedly exist in a state of permanent “warfare,” with nearly constant fighting and frequent wife beating (LINDHOLM and LINDHOLM, 1979). Fellow Pashtun will even criticize a man as weak and unmanly if he is *not* violent toward his wife: “A man who does not beat his wife will be abused by both men and women (including his wife) as ‘a man with no penis’” (LINDHOLM, 1982, p. 145). In the past, a man might cut off his wife’s nose or have her stoned to death for such offenses as leaving their house without permission or failing to cover herself adequately when in public. Now, however, the usual punishment is “only” a beating (Idem, p. 219).

The cold patriarchy is the dominant domestic structure elsewhere in most of Pakistan, and domestic violence reaches levels rarely if ever seen in societies with closer domestic structures. One form of Pakistani domestic violence is “stove burning” or “stove death”: A man pours kerosene on a woman and sets her on fire, then tells the police she suffered an accident while cooking (“an exploding stove”). Pakistani men (mainly husbands and in-laws) burn as many as three women a day in this fashion, and fewer than one-in-twenty survive. From 1994 to 2002, they burned about 500 women per year in the Islamabad region alone (TERZIEFF, 2002). Or a Pakistani man might permanently disfigure and possibly blind his wife by throwing acid in her face. During the same period noted above, Pakistani men threw acid in the faces of more than 1,000 women per year (WELSH, 2009, p. 29; see also KRISTOF, 2008).⁸

Although the cold patriarchy in its purest form is most common in Asian and African societies, a similar degree of domination is not unknown in modern Western societies. Some American men seemingly rule their partners by brute force alone, possibly to a point of sadism – a mode of domestic domination described by specialists in domestic violence with such terms as “patriarchal terrorism,” “intimate terrorism,” and “coercive control” (see respectively JOHNSON, 1995; 2008; STARK, 2007).⁹ One low-income African-American woman recounted the following details about her partner’s violence during the seven years of their relationship:

The breaking of dishes was my sign that I was next. He’d shove me, and I would land up on the floor where he’d use a broken bottle, dish, or kitchen knife to scratch me, lightly at first and then harder. He was very strong and used his weight to hold me down. If I’d try to resist, he’d use a belt to tie me to the bed, the couch, or the oven door. Then he’d start the real abuse (...) – the hitting, kicking, the punching, slapping, and all the rest. After he’d lock me in the closet or bedroom (RICHIE, 1996, p. 82).

Another low-income African-American woman had a similar experience with her partner of three years:

He’s a cruel, sick, mean man who tortured me, doing any and everything he could to keep my body and heart in pain. He beat me bad: hit me in the eye, cut me with a blade, made me stand on the hot plate that I used for cooking and slowly turned it up so my feet would burn up. You can’t imagine the pain. My feet are ruined. The other thing he used to do was try to throw me out the window. He would tie me up and drag me over to the window, laughing. Then he’d lean me out really far. I felt like I was going to fall the six stories to the ground. My ribs still hurt from leaning out. The next thing I knew he was pulling me back in, slugging me, kicking me, and twisting my arm behind my back (Idem, p. 81).

Other African-American women have described not only how their partners beat them and injured them with knives and various household objects (leaving them with scars and other mutilations) but also sought to embarrass and humiliate them in various ways, such as by locking them out of their apartment while nude or semi-nude, confining them to a room or closet, or (in one case) pushing the woman's head into a toilet, and forcing her to eat feces at the dinner table in front of her children (Idem, pp. 82; 86).¹⁰

Domestic violence also varies with the nature of a couple's social network. It is greatest when a couple lives among the husband's relatives and least when they live among the wife's relatives. Between these extremes is the level of domestic violence of couples who live close to the relatives of both partners and those who have no relatives living close to either partner (BAUMGARTNER, 1992; see also MICHALSKI, 2004, pp. 662-665). For instance, whereas couples in North India typically live surrounded by the husband's relatives and distant from the wife's relatives, those in South India live close to the relatives of both – and the former are subject to more domestic violence than the latter (MILLER, 1992, p. 180). In the Nagovisi tribe of Papua New Guinea, couples live in the wife's dwelling in her village surrounded by her relatives alone, and have hardly any domestic violence at all (NASH, 1992, pp. 99-100; see also MITCHELL, 1992). Women whose partner has strong ties to a male peer group experience more domestic violence as well (DEKESEREDY and SCHWARTZ, 2013).

Although domestic violence is greater in more distant domestic structures, domestic structures do not *cause* domestic violence. Nor do social networks. Nor, for that matter, do characteristics of entire societies or particular individuals cause domestic violence (for an overview of earlier theories, see MICHALSKI, 2004, pp. 657-660). The reason is that the characteristics of domestic structures, social networks, societies, and individuals are static, while the cause of domestic violence (like the cause of anything else) must be dynamic – something that *changes* before domestic violence occurs (see BLACK, 2011, p. 8). Moreover, by examining the history of specific cases of domestic violence, we can see that the primary cause of domestic violence is a movement of domestic time: a change in domestic space.

Domestic Time

The fundamental cause of conflict of all kinds is the movement of social time: the fluctuation of social space (BLACK, 2011, Ch. 1). A movement of *domestic time* is specifically a fluctuation of domestic space, a change in a particular domestic relationship. And the cause of most domestic violence is the movement of domestic time. Such is the subject of my second principle of domestic violence:

Domestic violence is a direct function of the movement of domestic time.

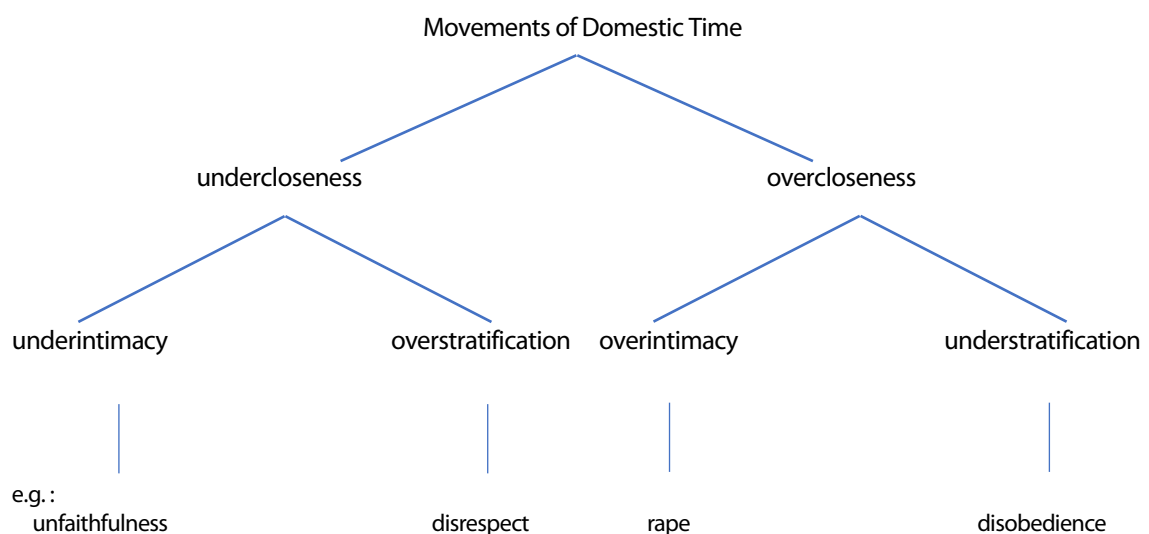
The greater and faster the movement of domestic time, the greater is the likelihood and severity of domestic violence.

I should first note, however, that the cause of domestic violence might occasionally lie beyond the domestic relationship where the violence occurs. For example, a man's loss of a job or other reversal of fortune could conceivably cause him to use violence against his partner (see BOWKER, 1983, p. 46; BLACK, 2011, p. 75). In fact, women sometimes say they do not know why their partner used violence against them – which might indicate that the cause was not located within their own domestic relationship (see, e.g., RICHIE, 1996; FERRARO, 2006; STARK, 2007; POTTER, 2008). Even so, evidence from both traditional and modern societies overwhelmingly indicates that *the primary cause of domestic violence is a change within the domestic relationship itself.*

Undercloseness

Movements of domestic time include both increases and decreases of domestic distance – *undercloseness* and *overcloseness* (see Figure 2). One form of undercloseness is *underintimacy*: an increase of relational distance between the partners. Another is *overstratification*: an increase of inequality between the partners (see BLACK, 2011, Chs. 3-4).¹¹ Both cause a great deal of domestic violence. First consider domestic underintimacy.

Figure 2: Causes of Domestic Violence



Domestic time = a change in domestic space (such as a decrease of intimacy or an increase of inequality).

Underintimacy. The termination of a domestic relationship is an especially radical increase of relational distance that causes some of the most extreme cases of domestic violence throughout the world. Most wife-killings in all societies thus occur after a woman leaves, divorces, or threatens to leave or divorce her husband (BARNARD et al., 1982, pp. 274; 277-279; DALY and WILSON, 1988, p. 219; WILSON and DALY, 1993; see also JOHNSON, 2008, Appendix B). In one American case a man warned his wife what would happen if she terminated their relationship: “I swear if you ever leave me, I’ll follow you to the ends of the earth and kill you.” When ultimately she did leave him, he found her and killed her with a shotgun (DALY and WILSON, 1988, p. 219). In another American case (involving immigrants from the Dominican Republic) a woman had for some time been “emotionally cold” toward her husband. When he arrived home from work, for example, she would pointedly go elsewhere in their trailer to avoid conversing with him, and she had also been limiting her sexual contact with him. Then one day after her husband learned that she was planning to take their son and move out of their trailer, he asked her if they could talk and “work out their problems.” She laughed and said “no.” That night he drowned her in the bathtub (WEBSDALE, 1999, pp. 83-84). For similar reasons a man might use a lesser amount of violence, such as a beating or rape (see, e.g., DEKESEREDY and SCHWARTZ, 2009; BLACK, 2011, pp. 23; 47-48). In one such case, when African-American professional football player Jonathan Dwyer’s wife “refused his sexual advances,” he “head-butted” her and broke her nose (CBS NEWS, 2014).

Unfaithfulness is another form of underintimacy that causes domestic violence, including homicide: “In every society for which we have been able to find a sample of spousal homicides, the story is basically the same. Most cases arise out of the husband’s (...) response to his wife’s (real or imagined) infidelity or desertion” (DALY and WILSON, 1988, p. 202; see also BLACK, 2011, pp. 44-46).¹² Unfaithfulness is the “most frequent” cause of women’s violence toward men as well (BURBANK, 1987, pp. 92-93). In the Bun tribe of Papua New Guinea, for instance, “sexual and other sorts of jealousy” are “probably the most important causes of violence between spouses” (MCDOWELL, 1992, p. 83). Unfaithfulness might lead to violence by either partner, and a wife might also “initiate or provoke violence” when she learns of her husband’s plan to acquire a second wife (Idem). In the Mehinaku tribe of Amazonian Brazil, a husband (especially if newly married) might publicly “beat and denounce” his unfaithful wife, while a wife might attack her unfaithful husband by “swinging a lighted brand” at him or destroying some of his property (GREGOR, 1977, p. 138).

Among both heterosexual and same-sex American couples, any apparent or actual romantic involvement by either partner in anyone else is a common cause of domestic violence (RENZETTI, 1992, pp. 36-43; 116; STARK, 2007, p. 248). When one African-American couple

(who had lived together less than a year) went to a nightclub together, for example, the woman poured liquor on the man and tried to hit him with the empty bottle “for talking with a white woman.” Months later, the man became angry with the same woman for “talking with a white man” at the same nightclub. When they got home he said, “Oh, so you like white boys now, huh?” – and raped her (possibly partly because she had also been refusing sex with him “for some time prior to that night”) (POTTER, 2008, pp. 81; 95). Another African-American woman described how her partner punished her for talking too much to someone at a party:

See this hand? I lost these fingers one night when he went real crazy. We’d been out at a party, and I was talking to this guy. He started on me right away. I was just having fun, but I knew I was in trouble by the look in his eye. He suddenly went and grabbed me, and we left. All the way home, he was holding my hand too tight and yelling at me. After a real good beating in the head, back, and neck, I was starting to pass out. That really made him mad, and so he took the meat cleaver and chopped it down on my hand (RICHE, 1996, p. 83).

One African-American man began beating his girlfriend after she admitted to being “sexually attracted to a woman” (Idem, p. 94). Another threatened his girlfriend with a knife because he thought she was dreaming about another man: “I was moaning in my sleep and he wanted to know who I was dreaming about” (Idem, p. 84). After seeing her partner get out of another woman’s car, an African-American woman shouted that she had told him “to stop having them damn women drop you off in front of my house!” and threw a pot of lye at him – which would have burned his flesh had he not managed to escape to a bedroom and close the door (HAMILTON, 2014).

A man or woman might suspect a partner of unfaithfulness when a phone rings and the caller hangs up, when someone honks a horn or says “hi” on the street, or when he or she is late from work. Any display of interest in someone else might be enough to cause violence. Because one working-class American white man became angry whenever his partner looked at another man on the street (“Get your goddam eyeballs back in your eyes!”), she finally began pretending to be asleep whenever they went anywhere in their car (FERRARO, 2006, pp. 44; 39; 38; see also 195-196). One working-class American white woman found her partner in a “topless bar” (where female employees are naked above the waist), struck him in the face outside the bar, then tried to run over him, knocking him onto the hood of her car and into the windshield (GALLOP, 2016).

A partner’s non-romantic involvement in others (such as family members, friends, or children) might also cause violence. In one sample of American domestic violence cases, “Jealousy was the most common theme in the violent incidents. Many of the husbands did not want their wives to be close to anyone except themselves. They were jealous of other men and sometimes of

other women [as well as] their own children” (BOWKER, 1983, p. 45; see also STARK, 2007, pp. 263-267). African-American professional football player Prince Shembo even became “jealous” of his girlfriend’s pet Yorkshire terrier, and kicked the little dog to death (GANTT, 2015).

Some men closely monitor their partner’s activities and seek to confine her to their dwelling to prevent her from having contact with other people – and become violent if they suspect her of an involvement in anyone else (see STARK, 2007, pp. 248-258). Specialists in domestic violence sometimes speak of such monopolistic behavior as a form of “pathological” jealousy peculiar to men who regard women as their personal property – a “morbid” mental condition they label with such terms as “obsessive possessiveness,” “male proprietariness,” and “gender entrapment” (see, e.g., RICHIE, 1996, pp. 3-4; WEBSDALE, 1999, pp. 80; 84-89; FERRARO, 2007, p. 195; STARK, 2007; POTTER, 2008, pp. 102-103; DEKESEREDY and SCHWARTZ, 2013, p. 88; see also JOHNSON and FERRARO, 2000). But (as illustrated in cases noted earlier) women might be violently possessive of a male partner as well.

The same is true of lesbians, one of whom (an American) made the following comment about her partner:

Eventually anything and everything that I did, whether it was having lunch with friends, going home to visit my family, even going to work, became a threat. In fact, it got to the point where she pressured me to quit my job. I did, because my going out and having contact with people at work was just too much. She got what she wanted by cutting me off from virtually everybody (RENZETTI, 1992, p. 37; see also pp. 38-43).

Another American lesbian had an equally possessive partner:

Her imagination was so much more lively than my life. If my life really fit her imagination, I would have had a ball of a time. (...) If I would go out and I wouldn’t be home at a time, whatever time she thought I should be, when I got home I had to detail every minute, where I had been, what I had been doing, who I’d been with, to the point that I felt like I was having affairs with all these people. I started to feel guilty (Idem, p. 142).

Gay men might be similarly possessive. One American gay man described some of his partner’s “jealous” and “controlling” behavior: “Any attention that I didn’t give to him – whether I gave it to friends, family, or other guys, even just other gay men who were my friends – he would get very upset if I hung out with them too much” (SHWAYDER, 2013). His partner “increasingly tried to cut off” all his contact with friends and family, and forced him to open a joint bank account so that he could not save money of his own and move out. He also threw tirades that included threats to commit suicide and harm their cat, and destroyed their joint possessions, such as when he smashed

a rack of drying dishes – saying they would no longer be needed when their relationship ended (Idem). Another American gay man “started taking over everything” in his partner’s life a couple of months after they began living together. One night in a fit of jealousy after his partner had been out dancing with other men, he threw him on the floor and tore away the underwear he had worn on their first date, saying, “How dare you wear those! Those are for me!” Another time he pulled his partner by the hair to his knees and put a butcher knife to his throat (for laughing when he was angry), then locked their bedroom door that night so he could not escape (Idem).

Whether male or female, heterosexual or same-sex, anyone who resists a partner’s efforts to monopolize his or her life is resisting closeness itself – which might provoke violence that in turn leads to more resistance to closeness, provoking more violence, more resistance, and so on, in a spiral of increasing violence over time.

Apart from physical closeness, domestic intimacy normally entails a degree of mutual support that includes a division of labor and possibly favors, gifts, and various kinds of sharing. Any failure to provide or reciprocate such support causes conflict and might lead to violence as well. Among low-income Egyptians, for example, a typical man holds two jobs and works long hours to provide his family with the necessities of life, such as housing, food, and clothing. “In return for his support, the family should obey and respect the man, and the wife should also serve him, keep house for him, submit sexually to him, and teach his children to respect their father. The basis for the relationship is reciprocity” (WIKAN, 1996, pp. 54-55; 83). Any wife who fails to live up to her obligations risks a beating (e.g., Idem, p. 99).

Among the Bun of Papua New Guinea, “The reason men frequently give for hitting their wives is that the women did not prepare food or did not work” or were not “adequately” caring for their children (MCDOWELL, 1992, p. 83). Women likewise attack husbands who do not live up to their obligations – such as one woman who hit her husband with a log (breaking his collarbone) because “he wanted to play cards while she wanted him to help her in the garden” (Idem). In the Kaliai tribe of New Britain Island (also in Papua New Guinea), a man might “strike” his wife “if she fails to meet her domestic obligations such as preparing meals, caring for their children, keeping their house and its grounds clean and tidy, or working in the gardens” (COUNTS, 1992, p. 66). In the Ik tribe of Uganda, a man might beat his wife for cooking his food “badly,” not having it “ready on time,” “not fetching water for washing,” or “not producing children” (TURNBULL, 1961, p. 166).¹³ And in the Zinacanteco tribe of Mexico, a man might beat his wife for being “slow in catering to his needs” or “refusing to perform such wifely duties as serving a meal” – while she might attack him for “getting drunk too often,” “spending too much

on drink, losing or ruining clothes when drunk,” “not working harder,” “not providing money for necessities,” or “sexual inadequacy” (COLLIER, 1973, pp. 183; 186).

Modern American domestic violence might also result from a partner’s failure to perform domestic functions such as “cooking, cleaning, or repairing the house,” child care, the management of money, and the handling of entertainment and other “social activities” (STRAUS, GELLES, and STEINMETZ, 1980, pp. 156-157; 171-173):

Can people really become violent over scrubbing the kitchen floor or cooking a steak? We found again and again that the answer is ‘yes.’ Women who have suffered violence from their husbands often give such reasons for the abuse. They report having plates of food broken over their heads and bowls of soup thrown in their faces by husbands unhappy with the quality of the meal (Idem, p. 157; see also FERRARO, 2006, p. 38).

When one working-class American white woman (addicted to “meth” – crystal methamphetamine) came home tired from work and started to take a nap in the bedroom, her drunken partner (also a meth addict) smashed a fluorescent light bulb on her head and demanded that she “get up and get me a beer.” The woman told him to “Kiss my ass!” – so he threw a beer bottle at her. After she took a shower and lay down on a couch, the man demanded that she take her children and get out of his house before he came back later that night. When he returned and found her asleep on the couch, he hit her several times with a pipe wrench (FERRARO, 2006, pp. 41; 235).

A working-class Appalachian American man often upset his wife by going out drinking with friends and coming home drunk, which led to fighting and other violence between the two. Once she threw a flower vase at him, splitting open his forehead. Finally, she warned him that the next time he came home drunk she would kill him. A week later when he came home drunk again and fell asleep on the couch, she “calmly retrieved a gasoline canister from the garage, poured it all over her husband, lit a match, and dropped it on his chest.” He “burst into flames” (but was “miraculously” saved by their eleven-year-old daughter and suffered “only mild burns”) (VANCE, 2016, pp. 43-44).

A working-class African-American man became violent after learning his partner was using cocaine and heroin, which apparently caused her to neglect her domestic obligations, such as caring for their two children (SIMON and BURNS, 1997, p. 50). When she ended their relationship shortly thereafter, he too became an addict. Later when he was living with another woman and refused to share his drugs with her, the woman “raised hell” and threw a brick at him (Idem, pp. 255-258). And when a working-class American white woman (drunk on beer) realized her husband was not going to give her a gift on Valentine’s Day, she scratched his face and attacked him with a baseball bat (FARBEROV, 2016).

Overstratification. Another form of undercloseness that causes domestic violence is domestic overstratification: an increase of inequality between the partners. One partner might lower the other with an insult or criticism, for example, or attempt to dominate the other with violence or a threat of violence.

One such scenario is a challenge to a partner's *domestic honor*. Honor is a form of social status based on force, and any challenge to honor – such as an insult or other display of disrespect – requires violence or a threat of violence in return. Otherwise the challenged party's honor is lost.¹⁴ Violence itself might also challenge a partner's domestic honor, leading to violence in return.¹⁵

Domestic violence among the Bun of Papua New Guinea often results from challenges to domestic honor: “Both women and men tend to be assertive, volatile, and quick to defend themselves. Physical violence plays an important role in self-assertion. It is a typical reaction to insult and frustration” and to “challenges to one's strength. (...) To be called weak or inferior provokes anger, which often escalates from verbal abuse to physical violence” (MCDOWELL, 1992, pp. 78; see also 81-82). A Bun husband typically attacks his wife with his hands and feet, while a wife might use a weapon (Idem, p. 82). In one case a man kicked his wife (fracturing her ribs) after she “accused him in obscene and insulting terms of spending all his money on women” when he was working away from their village (Idem, p. 83). After another man subjected his wife to a beating, she attacked him with an ax (Idem, p. 82). And because a man “made fun” of his wife when she fell down while helping pull a canoe to a river, she insulted him and stabbed him through the wrist with a machete (Idem).

In one African-American case involving domestic honor, a man had been living with a woman (whose skin was lighter than his) for several weeks when she called him “bad names” such as “nigger” and other “color slurs.” He described his reaction: “I put my fist in her mouth. Now she's living with a friend of mine” (LIEBOW, 1967, p. 138, note 2). Recall, too, the African-American woman who poured a bottle of liquor on her partner (and tried to hit him with the empty bottle) for talking to a white woman in a bar. When they got home he defended both his public honor and his domestic honor: “He was like, ‘Yeah, I'm'a teach you how to embarrass me in the club,’ and he just started beating the shit out of me. (...) I got loose from him by hittin' him in the privates. (...) He broke my nose, he cracked my jaw, [and] knocked teeth out of my mouth” (POTTER, 2008, p. 81).

African-American professional football player Ray Rice struck his partner Janay Palmer with his fist, knocking her unconscious in an elevator – the final step in a sequence beginning when she criticized him and he spat at her, she slapped him, they exchanged obscene insults, and she spat at him and then slapped him again. Although Janay later said the reason for their conflict was so

“insignificant” she could not even remember it, criticizing, insulting, slapping, and spitting at Ray challenged his honor and ultimately caused him to strike her with his fist (FRYE, 2014; USA TODAY, 2014). In a similar case after a working-class white woman “slapped [her boyfriend] in the face, spat at him, flicked her cigarette at him, and told him he was worthless,” he threw her to the ground and banged her head on a concrete curb – which killed her (WEBSDALE, 1999, p. 108).¹⁶

Other domestic violence occurs when one partner tries to dominate or increase domination over the other, or when they struggle over who will dominate whom (see BLACK, 1980, pp. 124-128; see also GOULD, 2003). In one such case a working-class African-American woman said that when she and her partner first began living together he was “the type of person that hustled” and “didn’t work” – and in those days life with him was “fun.” After they had a child, however, she “wanted something more traditional” and started to “get on him” about finding “a real 9-to-5 job.” But he refused to “change his lifestyle,” and became violent when she pressured him to do so (POTTER, 2008, p. 107). In another case when a working-class Italian-American woman complained to her husband (a methamphetamine addict and dealer) about the drug dealers who often came to their house, he “threatened to blow [her] head off” (FERRARO, 2006, p. 40).

Some domestic violence is itself a form of domination that leads to violence in return. A working-class Yugoslavian-American man (Frank) required his Albanian-American wife (Donna) to keep a “log book” to “record how she spent each day, whom she saw or talked with on the phone, (...) any and all expenditures, and [all her] meal plans for the month.” When he returned from work each night Frank would have a few beers and then “interrogate” Donna about her log entries, often berating and striking her for being “stupid” or “forgetful”: “If I said something he didn’t like, he would hit me. If I couldn’t account for exactly where I was, he would hit me.” She was beaten “for writing things down that she didn’t do or for things she intended to do tomorrow” and “whenever [she] started to talk” or “expressed a feeling” – seemingly for “anything” and “everything” (STARK, 2007, pp. 294; 296; 310; see also p. 299). Frank’s violence increased over the four years of their marriage, “occurring several times a month during the first year, at least once a week (usually during his day off)” the next year, and finally “whenever [she] saw him” (Idem, p. 299). But after a particularly severe beating one evening, Donna awoke at 5:30 the next morning and shot Frank with one of his guns, killing him as he slept (Idem).

In another case of violence caused by violence, a working-class American white woman (Dawn) reported that when her husband (Jeff) “felt she was lax in her duties, or when he suspected she was flirting with men, he punished her with extreme violence, including choking, throwing, kicking, and threatening her with a knife.” He also said “he would kill her if she tried to leave him, and threatened to take custody of their boys” (FERRARO, 2007, p. 181). Possibly because Jeff insisted that Dawn stop

working and stay home (though his own income did not cover their expenses), they had financial difficulties, and one day received a notice that their mortgage had been foreclosed and that they would lose their house. Fearing Jeff would severely beat or even kill her when he came home and learned of the foreclosure, Dawn loaded his gun and shot him when he walked in the door (though he suffered only organ damage and survived) (Idem, pp. 181-182; see also pp. 162-164).

Overcloseness

Domestic violence might also result from too much domestic closeness. One possibility is *overintimacy*: too much intimacy between the partners. Another is *understratification*: too little inequality between the partners (see BLACK, 2011, Chs. 2 and 4).

Overintimacy. Domestic overintimacy causes more domestic violence in less intimate couples, such as the cold patriarchies of Asia and North Africa (see Idem, p. 139). In these couples a woman might be too intrusive if she merely asks her husband about his activities. In the low-income Egyptian couple noted earlier, for example, Mustafa not only never told his wife anything about his life beyond their home, but became violent if she asked about it: “Mustafa ignored me completely. He came and went as it suited him, and beat me and abused me if I ever so much as asked him where he had been. (...) That’s how I lost my two front teeth” (WIKAN, 1996, p. 29).

Even in more intimate couples a man might inflict too much intimacy on a woman, such as by forcing her to engage in unwanted sex – possibly eliciting violence in return. In one case involving low-income African-Americans, a man “came home drunk and forced his wife to perform an ‘unnatural act’ [probably fellatio]. When he fell asleep, she took a two-bladed ax from the kitchen and held it over his head, closed her eyes, and buried the ax in the middle of his forehead” (LIEBOW, 1967, pp. 143-144, note 4). Domestic violence is itself a form of overintimacy, a trespass into the space of another person, and all the more when it inflicts pain (BLACK, 2011, pp. 22-23).

Understratification. A second kind of overcloseness that causes domestic violence is domestic understratification – too little inequality between the partners. It includes any threat to reduce domestic inequality, such as disobedience or anything else that might decrease one partner’s superiority or inferiority in relation to the other.¹⁷ Understratification causes more domestic violence in more unequal couples (see BLACK, 2011, p. 139). For example, a wife’s insubordination is a particularly common cause of domestic violence in cold patriarchies.

The Pashtun of Pakistan and Afghanistan say that their Muslim religion “relegates women to the status of servants,” and a typical Pashtun husband does in fact treat his wife as a servant if not a slave, readily beating her “severely” whenever she does not adequately submit to his authority (LINDHOLM, 1982, p. 145; LINDHOLM and LINDHOLM, 1979). If she rebels in any way he will not hesitate to attack her with a club, stone, or similarly dangerous weapon, possibly leaving permanent scars on her face. A Pashtun woman might nevertheless criticize her husband or otherwise challenge his authority, and possibly also “defend herself aggressively” with violence of her own (“clawing at her husband’s face” or “tearing the shirt from his back”), attracting still more violence against herself (LINDHOLM and LINDHOLM, 1979).

A husband in traditional Iran will “beat” his wife if she “disobeys” him, “talks back” to him, or if she “does not immediately and cheerfully perform the labor required of her” (HEGLAND, 1992, p. 208). He will likewise beat her “if she is not sufficiently submissive and sympathetic” to his relatives or if she does not display the proper demeanor and attitude of an inferior: “Correct behavior is not enough; correct *affect* is also owed to superiors” (Idem).

In traditional China a husband might beat his wife for failing to follow his orders, for “directly challenging a decision he has made,” or for “refusing to exhibit a properly subservient attitude” (GILMARTIN, 1990, p. 209). One such case began when a man fell asleep in the afternoon and did not awake in time for dinner. After waking up and discovering that his wife had already gone to bed for the night, he demanded that she get up and prepare a meal for him. When she refused because she was too tired, he “beat her so savagely that she died of a brain hemorrhage” (Idem).

The Geometry of Domestic Time

In sum: All couples are close, but some are closer than others. Close democracies are the closest, and cold patriarchies are the most distant. Between these extremes are loose anarchies and soft hierarchies. And more distant domestic structures are more violent: *Domestic violence is a direct function of domestic distance*. Cold patriarchies are therefore the most violent domestic structures, and close democracies are the least violent domestic structures.

Yet domestic structures do not *cause* domestic violence. The main cause of domestic violence is a movement of domestic time, a change in domestic space: *Domestic violence is a direct function of the movement of domestic time*. The movements of domestic time that cause most domestic violence are fluctuations of intimacy and inequality, and the same movements cause most domestic violence throughout the world and across history.¹⁸

But why do more distant couples have more domestic violence than closer couples? One reason is that more distant couples are faster domestic time zones: They experience more and greater social fluctuations, including more and greater decreases and increases of intimacy and inequality (see BLACK, 2015, p. 392).¹⁹ Domestic time slows down as couples grow older and closer, however, and domestic violence declines and largely or totally disappears. Even the highly violent Pashtun couples of Pakistan and Afghanistan become peaceful – often entirely so – as they reach their later years (LINDHOLM and LINDHOLM, 1979).

Another remaining question is why domestic conflict is so violent, possibly even homicidal, in the first place. Part of the answer is that couples are so close – if only because they live together and see so much of each other. This means that virtually all couples lose considerable closeness if and when their relationship ends or threatens to end. Anything else that reduces or threatens to reduce their closeness can lead to violence as well, partly because losses of closeness cause more conflict in closer relationships of all kinds (BLACK, 2011, pp. 138-140).²⁰ In couples separated by domestic inequality, any rebellion or other challenge to their level of inequality might also cause violence, and all the more where their inequality is greater (Idem). Movements of domestic time are therefore especially fateful and dangerous. And because domestic violence is a major movement of domestic time in its own right, domestic violence feeds on itself, gathering ever more momentum once it begins (see Idem, pp. 76-78).²¹

Conclusion

The theory of domestic violence introduced here has several distinctive features. It understands domestic violence as a form of conflict management: self-help – the handling of a grievance with aggression. It builds on a larger body of theory addressing other forms of conflict management such as law, lynching, terrorism, and genocide.²² It applies to domestic violence by both men and women, in both heterosexual and same-sex couples, and in both traditional and modern societies. And it is capable of identifying the cause of any case of domestic violence that occurs.

Notice too that this theory does not explain domestic violence with the characteristics of an entire society (such as its male-dominated or capitalistic nature) – a strategy that cannot tell us why some domestic structures are more violent than others or why any specific case of domestic violence occurs. Nor does it explain domestic violence with the characteristics of individuals (such as their personalities or childhood experiences) – another strategy that cannot tell us why some domestic structures are more violent or why any specific case of domestic violence occurs (for a

review of earlier theories, see MICHALSKI, 2004, pp. 657-660; 2005, pp. 613-617).²³ Instead the logic of this theory is geometrical: It specifies the location and direction of domestic violence in domestic space as well as the changes in domestic space – movements of domestic time – that cause domestic violence to occur. It illustrates a strategy of explanation applicable not merely to domestic violence but to any form of violence or, for that matter, any form of human behavior (see, e.g., BLACK, 1995, 2000, 2011). It is pure sociology.

Notas

¹ Because law is backed by force, it too is a form of moralistic violence. Violence might also be predatory (for gain), recreational (for pleasure), ritualistic (for ceremonial purposes), or altruistic (for someone's benefit) (see BLACK, 2004b, p. 146).

² I refer here to the frequency of violence between adults in everyday life (and exclude violence involving children or animals and violence in sports such as boxing and American football).

The amount of domestic violence is difficult to determine, but we know that it varies greatly across societies and that some tribal societies have little or none at all (see, e.g., HOWELL, 1989; MITCHELL, 1992; NASH, 1992). In a world sample of 90 tribal and peasant societies, Levinson found that "wife beating is the most common form of family violence," occurring at least "occasionally" in about 85 percent of the societies in his sample. "Husband beating" occurs in about one-fourth of the societies, and is found only where wife beating is also present (in about one-third of those with wife beating). And husband beating occurs "less often" than wife beating where both are present (LEVINSON, 1989, p. 31).

A common estimate is that at least one-fourth of modern American women have experienced domestic violence by a current or former partner. Some researchers report that modern American women engage in domestic violence at a rate comparable to that of men, while others report that violence by women toward men is less frequent, less severe, and more likely to be used in self-defense (see, e.g., JOHNSON and FERRARO, 2000, p. 952-952; MICHALSKI, 2005). Finally, in modern American same-sex couples the frequency of domestic violence is estimated to be similar to that in heterosexual couples, though domestic violence in gay male couples is believed to be more severe than that in lesbian couples (see RENZETTI, 1992, pp. 17-25; SHWAYDER, 2013; STILES-SHIELDS and CARROLL, 2015).

³ Considerable cultural distance (including a language difference) does, however, occasionally separate domestic partners. For example, such was the case in early America when men of European ancestry married Native American ("Indian") women (see, e.g., DEL MAR, 1996, pp. 27-28). And modern Korean and Japanese men in rural areas sometimes arrange (via "marriage brokers") to marry women from other countries such as China, Vietnam, and the Philippines (WISEMAN, 2008).

⁴ The Pashtun are also known as the Pushtun, Pukhtun, Pakhtun, and Pathan.

⁵ Some African-American women with children have never lived with a man, and do not plan ever to do so on a permanent basis (RICHIE, 1996, pp. 78-79; 136-137; EDIN, 2000).

⁶ Why do domestic structures differ across societies and couples? Why, for example, are cold patriarchies so common in traditional Pakistan but rare in modern America? And why do domestic structures differ so much in modern America and so little in tribal and other traditional societies? One reason is that domestic structures reflect the social locations of men and women in the larger society. In other words, the place of men and women in any society reappears in their domestic relationships. Because most men and women in Pakistan are highly unequal and otherwise socially distant from one another in all walks of Pakistani life, for example, the same is true of their domestic relationships. In modern America, however, where the social locations of men and women differ greatly across society, the same is true of domestic structures. Moreover, in any particular couple, if the social location of either partner in the larger society changes at any time (such as when a man loses his job or a woman obtains a job that reduces her economic dependence on her partner), their domestic structure is likely to change as well.

⁷ The principle that domestic violence is a direct function of domestic distance also predicts that domestic violence will increase with any cultural distance that separates the partners – such as when a couple is interethnic (which presently includes most American interracial couples). Early American marriages between Euro-American men and Native American women were comparatively violent, for example, and sketchy evidence indicates that the same is true of marriages between modern Korean and Japanese men and women from other Asian countries (DEL MAR, 1996, pp. 27-28; WISEMAN, 2008).

⁸ This estimate includes acid attacks on women by unmarried as well as married men.

⁹ One researcher reports that some African-American women consciously seek partners who cannot dominate them by brute force: They "like to be with men who are comparatively small in stature, because the women would have equal

footing when the violence commenced, or the men would simply be reluctant to introduce physical abuse into the relationship because of their diminutive size" (POTTER, 2008, p. 126).

¹⁰ I lack adequate information about the domestic structure of the couples in these African-American cases, but suspect they are patriarchal and highly distant in other respects.

¹¹ Clashes of culture are also movements of social time – cultural time (see BLACK, 2011, Chs. 6-7). Although I have not found movements of cultural time to be a major cause of domestic violence, such cases do occasionally occur. In one American case in 2016, for instance, violence erupted when a husband and wife quarreled about who would be a better president, Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. The woman (who favored Clinton) reported that her husband of 20 years (who favored Trump) called her derogatory names and threw her to the floor, hurting her backside. But her husband said he merely shoved his wife back when she tried to slap him, causing her to slip and fall (SMOKING GUN, 2016).

¹² Sexual infidelity is a form of underintimacy because of the zero-sum nature of intimacy: If person A and person B have a close relationship, their closeness decreases if either develops a new relationship with someone else. The closer the new relationship, the more closeness the earlier relationship loses. A new sexual relationship by one of the partners is therefore especially damaging to a couple's closeness (BLACK, 2011, pp. 4; 44-46).

¹³ The punishment of women for failing to produce children (especially sons) is found in other societies as well (e.g., GILMARTIN, 1990, p. 209; SAMI and ALI, 2012).

¹⁴ In modern societies, such violence might occur among young men defending their honor among peers (BLACK, 1990, pp. 75-76; 2011, pp. 71-74; see also COONEY, 1998, Ch. 5).

In contrast to what I mean by "domestic honor," family honor pertains to the ability of males to dominate and protect the females of their household. In some societies (such as those of South Asia and the Middle East), a man might direct violence at a woman who damages their family's honor. For example, a father might kill his daughter for having an illicit sexual relationship – which would otherwise dishonor their family (see COONEY, 2014a, 2014b; see also BLACK, 2011, p. 175).

¹⁵ Whereas domestic and other violence between largely equal partners is frequently bilateral (two-sided), that between unequal partners is more likely to be unilateral (one-sided) and is also mostly downward in its direction (against the social inferior). For example, largely equal low-income African-Americans have more bilateral domestic violence than do unequal low-income white Americans (see, e.g., POTTER, 2008, Ch. 6, especially pp. 116; 126).

¹⁶ Although it is unclear whether this couple had been living together at the time of the woman's death, the incident is in any case an example of honor violence in an intimate relationship.

¹⁷ Domestic violence is often a mode of situational domination. Domestic violence that increases a superior's domination or lowers a former equal is a form of overstratification, while domestic violence that challenges a superior's authority is a form of understratification (see BLACK, 2011, pp. 76-78; 90-92).

¹⁸ Mark Cooney notes (in a personal communication, 2016) that the theory of domestic violence introduced above seemingly contradicts the famous opening sentence of Leo Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina*: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" (TOLSTOY, 1877). When it comes to domestic violence – presumably an unhappy time – couples are quite similar. Their violence obeys the same sociological principles.

¹⁹ The closest relationships in society (such as extremely close couples) are comparatively stable. They cannot become significantly closer, nor are they likely to experience major losses of closeness. The most distant relationships (complete strangers) are also comparatively stable. They cannot become more distant, nor are they likely to become closer. The movement of social time is thus the slowest in the closest and the most distant relationships: *The speed of social time is a curvilinear function of social distance*.

The closest couples (close democracies) therefore have the slowest domestic time zones and the least domestic violence. On the other hand, the higher level of domestic violence among the most distant couples (cold patriarchies) appears to result mostly from fluctuations of domestic inequality, such as when a wife does not conform to her husband's demands or when he increases or attempts to increase his degree of domination (see, e.g., LINDHOLM and LINDHOLM, 1979).

²⁰ *Undercloseness conflict is a direct function of social closeness*. By contrast: *Overcloseness conflict is an inverse function of social closeness* (BLACK, 2011, pp. 138-140).

²¹ Also relevant to the violent nature of so much domestic conflict is that other forms of conflict management (such as avoidance and mediation) are often unavailable. In modern societies such as the United States another option is to call the police – which might lead to violence of another kind: arrest and possibly incarceration (see BLACK, 1980, pp. 124-128; COONEY, 1998, pp. 103-104; BAUMGARTNER, 1984, p. 97; 1988; BLACK, 1990, pp. 76-83).

²² See, e.g., HORWITZ, 1982; BAUMGARTNER, 1988; SENECHAL DE LA ROCHE, 1996, 1997; BLACK, 1998, 2004a, 2004b, 2010; COONEY, 1998, 2009; MANNING, 2012, 2014; CAMPBELL, 2015; PHILLIPS and COONEY, 2015; TUCKER, 1999, 2015).

²³ All couples in a society obviously do not have the same amount of domestic violence – if they have any at all. Nor do any individuals engage in domestic violence on a continuous basis, whenever the partners are together. A societal explanation therefore overcollectivizes domestic violence, while an individualistic explanation overpersonalizes domestic violence (see BLACK, 1995, pp. 852-858; 2004b, p. 147).

Referências

- BARNARD, George W.; VERA, Hernan; VERA, Maria I. [and] NEWMAN, Gustave. (1982), "Till Death Do Us Part: A Study of Spouse Murder". *Bulletin of the American Association of Psychiatry and Law*, Vol. 10, pp. 271-280.
- BAUMGARTNER, M. P. (1984), "Social Control in Suburbia". In: BLACK, Donald (ed.), *Toward a General Theory of Social Control, Volume 1: Fundamentals*. Orlando, FL, Academic Press, pp. 79-103.
- _____. (1988), *The Moral Order of a Suburb*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- _____. (1992), "Violent Networks: The Origins and Management of Domestic Conflict". In: FELSON, Richard [and] TEDESCHI, James (eds.), *Violence and Aggression: The Social Interactionist Perspective*. Washington, D.C., American Psychological Association, pp. 209-231.
- BLACK, Donald. (1980), *The Manners and Customs of the Police*. New York, Academic Press.
- _____. (1983), "Crime as Social Control". *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 48, pp. 34-45.
- _____. (1990), "The Elementary Forms of Conflict Management". In: BLACK, Donald. (1998), *The Social Structure of Right and Wrong*. San Diego, Academic Press, pp. 74-94.
- _____. (1995), "The Epistemology of Pure Sociology". *Law & Social Inquiry*, Vol. 20, pp. 829-870.
- _____. (1998), *The Social Structure of Right and Wrong*. San Diego, Academic Press.
- _____. (2000), "Dreams of Pure Sociology". *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 18, pp. 345-367.
- _____. (2004a), "The Geometry of Terrorism". In: SENECHAL DE LA ROCHE, Roberta (ed.), *Theories of Terrorism*. *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 22, n° 1, pp. 14-25.
- _____. (2004b), "Violent Structures". In: ZAHN, Margaret; BROWNSTEIN, Henry [and] JACKSON, Shelly (eds.), *Violence: From Theory to Research*. Newark, NJ, LexisNexis/Anderson Publishing Company, pp. 145-158.
- _____. (2010), *The Behavior of Law*. Bingley, UK, Emerald Group Publishing (special edition; first edition, 1976).
- _____. (2011), *Moral Time*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- _____. (2015), "The Beginning of Social Time: An Interview with Myself". In: TUCKER, James (ed.), *The Pure Sociology of Right and Wrong: New Directions in Donald Black's Theory of Law and Social Control*. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, Vol. 43, pp. 382-395.
- BOURGOIS, Philippe. (1995), *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- BOWKER, Lee H. (1983), *Beating Wife-Beating*. Lexington, MA, Lexington Books.
- BRIGGS, Jean L. (1970), *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- BROUDE, Gwen J. (2003), "Husband-Wife Interaction and Aloofness". In: EMBER, Carol [and] EMBER, Melvin (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender: Men and Women of the World's Cultures*. New York, Springer, pp. 192-203.
- BURBANK, Victoria Katherine. (1987), "Female Aggression in Cross-Cultural Perspective". *Behavior Science Research*, Vol. 21, pp. 70-100.

- CBS NEWS. (2014), "Jonathan Dwyer Head-Butted His Wife After She Refused Sex, Police Say". Available (on-line) in: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/jonathan-dwyer-head-butted-his-wife-after-she-refused-sex-police-report-says/>
- COONEY, Mark. (1998), *Warriors and Peacemakers: How Third Parties Shape Violence*. New York, New York University Press.
- _____. (2009), *Is Killing Wrong? A Study in Pure Sociology*. Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press.
- _____. (2014a), "Death by Family: Honor Violence as Punishment". *Punishment & Society*, Vol. 16, pp. 406-427.
- _____. (2014b), "Family Honour and Social Time". In: KILBY, Jane [and] RAY, Larry (eds.), *Violence and Society: Toward a New Sociology*. Hoboken, NJ, Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 87-106.
- COUNTS, Dorothy Ayers; BROWN, Judith K. [and] CAMPBELL, Jacquelyn C. (eds.). (1992), *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*. Boulder, CO, Westview Press.
- DALY, Martin [and] WILSON, Margo. (1988), *Homicide*. New York, Aldine de Gruyter.
- DEKESEREDY, Walter S. [and] SCHWARTZ, Martin D. (2009), *Dangerous Exits: Escaping Abusive Relationships in Rural America*. New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press.
- _____. (2013), *Male Peer Support and Violence Against Women: The History and Verification of a Theory*. Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- DEL MAR, David Peterson. (1996), *What Trouble I Have Seen: A History of Violence Against Wives*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- DOBASH, R. Emerson [and] DOBASH, Russell. (1979), *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy*. New York, Free Press.
- EDIN, Kathryn. (2000), "What Do Low-Income Single Mothers Say about Marriage?" *Social Problems*, Vol. 47, n° 1, pp. 112-133.
- FARBEROV, Snezana. (2016), "Wife 'Beat Husband Unconscious with a Baseball Bat in a Drunken Rage After He Got Her Nothing for Valentine's Day'". *The Daily Mail*. Available (on-line) in: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3449837/Wife-beats-husband-unconscious-baseball-bat-drunken-rage-got-Valentine-s-Day.html>
- FERRARO, Kathleen J. (2006), *Neither Angels nor Demons: Women, Crime, and Victimization*. Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- FRYE, Patrick. (2014), "Janay Palmer, Ray Rice's Wife, Explains the Elevator Fight Video in Her Own Words". *Inquisitr*. Available (on-line) in: <http://www.inquisitr.com/1694886/janay-palmer-ray-rices-wife-explains-the-elevator-fight-video-in-her-own-words/>
- GALLOP, J. D. (2016), "Police: Woman Ran Over Boyfriend Outside Topless Spot". *USA Today*. Available (on-line) in: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/03/24/florida-police-woman-ran-over-boyfriend-car-topless-club/82200722/>
- GANTT, Darin. (2015), "Ex-Girlfriend: Prince Shembo Was Jealous of Dog He Kicked and Killed". *NBC News*. Available (on-line) in: <http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2015/06/03/ex-girlfriend-prince-shembo-was-jealous-of-dog-he-kicked-and-killed/>
- GIBSON, Thomas P. (1986), *Sacrifice and Sharing in the Philippine Highlands: Religion and Society among the Buid of Mindoro*. London, Athlone.
- _____. (1989), "Symbolic Representations of Tranquility and Aggression among the Buid". In: HOWELL, Signe [and] WILLIS, Roy (eds.), *Societies at Peace: Anthropological Perspectives*. London, Routledge, pp. 60-78.

- GILMARTIN, Christina. (1990), "Violence Against Women in Contemporary China". In: LIPMAN, Jonathan N. [and] HARRELL, Stevan (eds.), *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture*. Albany, State University of New York Press, pp. 203-225.
- GOFFMAN, Alice. (2014), *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. New York, Picador.
- GOULD, Roger V. (2003), *Collision of Wills: How Ambiguity about Social Rank Breeds Conflict*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- HAMILTON, Anthony. (2014), "Confessions of an Abuser: I Hit Women". *Ozy*. Available (on-line) in: <http://www.ozy.com/true-story/confessions-of-an-abuser-i-hit-women/33897>
- HARNER, Michael J. (1972), *The Jívaro: People of the Sacred Waterfalls*. Garden City, NY, Anchor Books.
- HEGLAND, Mary Elaine. (1992), "Wife Abuse and the Political System: A Middle Eastern Case Study". In: COUNTS, Dorothy Ayers; BROWN, Judith [and] CAMPBELL, Jacquelyn (eds.), *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, pp. 203-218.
- HORWITZ, Allan V. (1982), *The Social Control of Mental Illness*. New York, Academic Press.
- HOWELL, Signe. (1989), "'To Be Angry Is Not to Be Human, But to Be Fearful Is': Chewong Concepts of Human Nature". In: HOWELL, Signe [and] WILLIS, Roy (eds.), *Societies at Peace: Anthropological Perspectives*. London, Routledge, pp. 45-59.
- JOHNSON, Michael P. (1995), "Patriarchal Terrorism and Common Couple Violence: Two Forms of Violence Against Women". *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 57, n° 2, pp. 283-294.
- _____. (2008), *A Typology of Domestic Violence: Intimate Terrorism, Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence*. Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- _____ [and] FERARRO, Kathleen J. (2000), "Research on Domestic Violence in the 1990s: Making Distinctions". *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 62, pp. 948-963.
- KRISTOF, Nicholas. (2008), "Terrorism That's Personal". *New York Times*. Available (on-line) in: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/opinion/30kristof.html?_r=0
- LEVINSON, David. (1989), *Family Violence in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications.
- LIEBOW, Elliot. (1967), *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*. Boston, Little Brown.
- LINDHOLM, Charles. (1982), *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- _____ [and] LINDHOLM, Cherry. (1979), "Marriage as Warfare". *Natural History*, Vol. 88, pp. 11-21.
- MANNING, Jason. (2012), "Suicide as Social Control". *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 27, pp. 207-227.
- _____. (2015), "Suicide and Social Time". *Dilemas: Revistas de Estudos de Conflito e Controle Social*, Vol. 8, n° 1, pp. 97-126.
- MCDOWELL, Nancy. (1992), "Household Violence in a Yuat River Village". In: COUNTS, Dorothy Ayers; BROWN, Judith K. [and] CAMPBELL, Jacquelyn C. (eds.), *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, pp. 77-88.
- MICHALSKI, Joseph H. (2004), "Making Sociological Sense Out of Trends in Intimate Partner Violence: The Social Structure of Violence Against Women". *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 10, n° 6, pp. 652-675.
- _____. (2005), "Explaining Intimate Partner Violence: The Sociological Limitations of Victimization Studies". *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 20, pp. 613-640.

- MILLER, Barbara Diane. (1992), "Wife-Beating in India: Variations on a Theme". In: COUNTS, Dorothy Ayers; BROWN, Judith K. [and] CAMPBELL, Jacquelyn C. (eds.), *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, pp. 173-184.
- MITCHELL, William E. (1992), "Why Wape Men Don't Beat Their Wives: Constraints Toward Domestic Tranquility". In: COUNTS, Dorothy Ayers; BROWN, Judith K. [and] CAMPBELL, Jacquelyn C. (eds.), *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, pp. 89-98.
- NASH, Jill. (1992), "Factors Relating to Infrequent Domestic Violence among the Nagovisi". In: COUNTS, Dorothy Ayers; BROWN, Judith K. [and] CAMPBELL, Jacquelyn C. (eds.), *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, pp. 99-110.
- PETERSON, Elicka S. L. (1999), "Murder as Self-Help: Women and Intimate Partner Homicide". *Homicide Studies*, Vol. 3, pp. 30-46.
- PHILLIPS, Scott [and] COONEY, Mark. (2015), "The Electronic Pillory: Social Time and Hostility Toward Capital Murderers". *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 49, pp. 725-759.
- POTTER, Hillary. (2008), *Battle Cries: Black Women and Intimate Partner Abuse*. New York, New York University Press.
- REID, John Phillip. (1970), *A Law of Blood: The Primitive Law of the Cherokee Nation*. New York, New York University Press.
- RENZETTI, Claire M. (1992), *Violent Betrayal: Partner Abuse in Lesbian Relationships*. Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications.
- RICHIE, Beth E. (1996), *Compelled to Crime: The Gender Entrapment of Battered Black Women*. New York, Routledge.
- SAMI, Neelofar [and] ALI, Tazeen S. (2012), "Domestic Violence Against Infertile Women in Karachi, Pakistan". *Asian Review of Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, pp. 15-20.
- SENECHAL DE LA ROCHE, Roberta. (1996), "Collective Violence as Social Control". *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 11, pp. 97-128.
- _____. (1997), "The Sociogenesis of Lynching". In: BRUNDAGE, W. Fitzhugh (ed.), *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, pp. 48-76.
- SHWAYDER, Maya. (2013), "A Same-Sex Domestic Violence Epidemic Is Silent". *The Atlantic*. Available (on-line) in: <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/11/same-sex-domestic-violence-epidemic-is-silent/281131/>
- SIMON, David [and] BURNS, Edward. (1997), *The Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-City Neighborhood*. New York, Broadway Books.
- THE SMOKING GUN. (2016), "Trump Backer Busted for Battering Wife". *The Smoking Gun*. Available (on-line) in: <http://thesmokinggun.com/documents/celebrity/clinton-trump-battery-029843>
- STACK, Carol B. (1974), *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York, Harper & Row.
- STARK, Evan. (2007), *Coercive Control: The Entrapment of Women in Personal Life*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- STILES-SHIELDS, Colleen [and] CARROLL, Richard A. (2015), "Same-Sex Domestic Violence: Prevalence, Unique Aspects, and Clinical Implications". *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, Vol. 41, n° 6, pp. 636-648.
- STRAUS, Murray; GELLES, Richard J. [and] STEINMETZ, Suzanne K. (1980), *Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the Family*. New York, Doubleday.

- TERZIEFF, Juliette. (2002), “Pakistan’s Fiery Shame: Women Die in Stove Deaths”. Women’s eNews. Available (on-line) in: <http://womensenews.org/story/domestic-violence/021027/pakistans-fiery-shame-women-die-stove-deaths>
- TOLSTOY, Leo. (1877), *Anna Karenina*. Hollywood, FL, Simon & Brown, 2011.
- TUCKER, James. (1999), *The Therapeutic Corporation*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- _____. “The Geometry of Suicide Law”. In: TUCKER, James (ed.), *The Pure Sociology of Right and Wrong*. International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, Vol. 43, n° 3, pp. 342-365.
- USA TODAY. (2014), “Longer Video Shows Obscenities, Spitting in Ray Rice Incident”. Available (on-line) in: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/2014/09/09/longer-rice-video-shows-obscenities-spitting/15321141/>
- VANCE, J. D. (2016), *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. New York, Harper.
- WEBSDALE, Neil. (1999), *Understanding Domestic Homicide*. Boston, Northeastern University Press.
- WELSH, Jane. (2009), ‘It Was Like Burning in Hell’: A Comparative Exploration of Acid Attack Violence. Master’s Thesis. Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- WELTCH, Liz. (2003), “‘Honor Violence’ in Pakistan”. Frontpage Mag. Available (on-line) in: <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=16589>
- WIKAN, Unni. (1996), *Tomorrow, God Willing: Self-Made Destinies in Cairo*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- WILSON, Margo [and] DALY, Martin. (1993), “Spousal Homicide Risk and Estrangement”. *Violence and Victims*, Vol. 8, n° 1, pp. 3-16.
- WISEMAN, Paul. (2008), “Asian Men Seek Brides from Poorer Nations”. USA Today. Available (on-line) in: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-02-27-brides_N.htm

DONALD BLACK (black@virginia.edu) é University Professor of the Social Sciences Emeritus da University of Virginia (EUA). Anteriormente, ocupou cargos docentes na Yale University (EUA) e na Harvard Law School (EUA). Tem PhD em sociologia pela University of Michigan (EUA).