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Long Abstract:

The experience of interpersonal violence is probably one of the most relevant elements that shape the life course of individuals worldwide. Understanding the reasons behind violent behaviors has been the objective of many researchers in the field of social sciences. Furthermore, one central aim of the state is to prevent violence and ensure the security of its citizens.

One of the clearest pictures of the levels of interpersonal violence globally is shown in the reports of violence and crime provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). These reports cover the impact of different types of non-political violence globally and provide detailed profiles of the violence rates for each country. They approach violence as a "multifaced problem with biological, psychological, social and environmental roots" (2014, p. 27). According to Krug in the WHO report (2002), these reports provide an "ecological model of violence" that identifies factors (e.g., alcoholism, inequalities, state governance) that increase the risk of violence at different levels (individual, relationship, community and societal).

These documents are interesting since they show that countries experience interpersonal violence in different forms, amounts, and contexts, with different legal attitudes towards it. Yet, there seems to be a core of common factors that predict the risk of violence.

Even if both sets of reports mention the relevance of social norms and culture in all the levels of the ecological model of violence, their objectives are not intended to nor do they explain how culture affects violence. Rather the purpose of these reports is to summarize levels of different types of violence around the world. The data is intended to be used by scholars to search for the underlying mechanisms that cause violence and how to reduce those levels.

This research aims to demonstrate potential causal relations between certain cultural factors related to social organization and levels of interpersonal violence. In short, I ask what are some cross-culturally common cultural factors that affect levels of violence in contemporary societies? By approaching the rich field of studies on homicide from a historical legacy of medieval family structures, I hope to provide a model that enable us to answer (at least partly) the question of how family structure affects rates of homicide directly, and indirectly, affecting the factors that increase the risk for interpersonal violence to occur.

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The study of how historical family systems impact levels of violence both within the household and beyond, is still developing. In particular, two scholars have paid attention to it, Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca (2019) and Ana Tur-Prats (2015).

My research is the first project, to my knowledge, that focuses on the causes of interpersonal fatal violence from a cross-cultural perspective. The relevance of the results highlights the explanatory power of historical family systems as an independent variable not only for fatal interpersonal violence but for indirect factors that increase levels of interpersonal violence (eg. alcohol consumption, income inequalities, and levels of governability of the country).

The database employed contains a total of 181 observations at the country level (145 in the model), and a total of 17 variables, including the main independent variables, the mediators and controls. The variables regarding the family structure (verticality, inequality, and women status) were obtained from the codification made by Le Bris (2016) of the data contained in Emanuel Todd's books (2011, 1995), this data refers to the family structure form late middle ages and early modern. These variables are measured in a dichotomous way (0-1): Verticality, extended versus nuclear family; Inequality, non-egalitarian versus egalitarian inheritance system among the siblings; and Women status, countries in which woman had higher status, in terms of being able to inherit as their male siblings and to choose the location where to live after marriage, versus those countries whose family structure didn't give this status to women.

I selected homicides as the indicator of interpersonal violence in this model because this seems to be the most reliable reported data on violence across countries, the variable is measured as the average rate of homicides from 2001 till 2017. To capture the factors of risk of violence described in the mentioned reports I employ the variables: Gini and GDP pc (From the World Bank Data), prevalence of alcohol use disorders (WHO open data) and governance (Worldwide Governance Indicators database (Kaufmann et al., 2011)). Those variables measured as the average from 2001 to 2017. (The remaining variables are included as controls: number of civil wars form 1990; Ethnic fractionalization (Alesina et al., 2003); average years of education; proportion of population of the main 3 religions; average population of the country; average poverty (less than 5.50 $ppp a day); and average unemployment rate).

The main goal of this project is to test if these three independent variables affect rates of homicides, either directly or channeled by affecting the aforementioned factors of risk of violence. In line with the findings about revolutionary terrorism (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2019, p. 229) and attitudes about domestic violence in Spain (Tur-Prats, 2015), the results obtained in this work prove that the nuclear and egalitarian family structures have left a legacy of higher fatal

violent behavior. And, thanks to the methodology selected, we can conclude that non-egalitarian families have a negative effect on homicide rates mediated by levels of alcohol consumption and governability of the country, while authoritarian families have a direct negative effect on rates of homicide.

Figure 1. The graphical model.
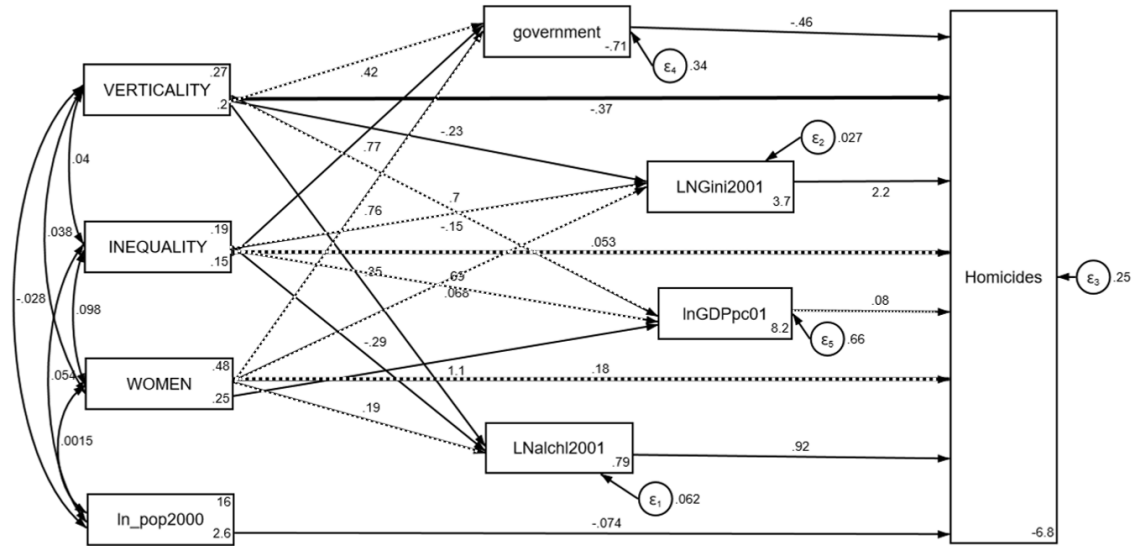
The figure shows the significant links with continue straight lines and the non-significant links in dot lines.[1]

While attending to the direct effects of verticality over homicides, the mechanism that I defend that explains this statistical finding is based on the common sense (as the most resilient cultural expression able to affect human behavior) associated with the family systems. I argue that the common sense that was formed with these historical family structures is still being transmitted to the next generations. The common sense of extended families is based on the acceptance of authority, and this authority is represented throw social and legal norms (that consider homicide a crime), therefore, the individual will consider homicide as a crime against authority. This common sense of authority will affect the individual behavior by rejecting the entrance of this action within his repertoire of actions, and therefore, those individuals will be less likely to commit these violent actions.

On the other way, we have also a clearer picture of how the historical unequal family system affects homicides indirectly. The model shows that the non-egalitarian systems left a legacy over two of the factors that reduce the risk of violence: the good governability of the country and less alcohol abuse. No study has been focused yet in alcohol abuse or governance as legacy of

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[1] The mentioned controls aren't included in the diagram but are included in the equation of the model. The model passed the tests of goodness of fit (RMSEA, CFI, SRMR), and the logarithmic transformation were applied to some of the variables in order to cope with problems of heteroskedasticity.

historical family systems. I propose some interpretations of these results based in the link of unequal family systems with higher economic development and social tolerance of inequalities for better governability, and "family anxiety" and frustration for alcohol abuse (Bowen, 1974; Kahn and Lewis, 1988). But yet, those interpretations require a more detailed test, which suggests possibilities of expanding in this research.

Moreover, the unit of analysis of the data used for this work is the country, this is linked to major assumption, that is country homogeneity in terms of family systems. It is quite rare to find countries with only one family type. This database is focused on the majoritarian family type in each country, but then, we may be ignoring the possible effects of minority family types in the country. We count on the same family classification data at the sub-national level for Europe (Duranton et al., 2009), further work may be focused on replicate the same model at the sub-national level to test the reliability of these results.

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