



How Women Express Conflict in Nomadic Band Societies

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This poster focuses on female aggression and conflict management at the nomadic band level of social organization. Studies of nomadic band societies may offer insights about human nature and the evolutionary past. The sample for this study consisted of 21 nomadic hunter-gatherer societies that are represented in the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample, an assembly of 186 cultures worldwide of various social types. Ethnographic data relevant to female aggression and conflict resolution were thoroughly reviewed for each of the 21 nomadic forager societies. The primary reason for female aggression was jealousy. The most frequent targets of female aggression were husbands and co-wives or other female rivals. Women engaged in certain aggressive behaviors that were rarely reported for men in the same ethnographic sources, namely, scratching with finger nails, pulling hair, and biting. Women, like men, engaged in friendly peacemaking activities such as trying to separate disputants either before or during a fight, but reports of women actively mediating disputes were rare. This is the first study to focus directly on female aggression and conflict resolution within a sample of nomadic forager societies. The findings on female aggression and conflict management are compared briefly to male behavior.