

Title: Anne Campbell

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Synonyms/Keywords: Intrasexual aggression, indirect aggression, urban gangs, female gangs, maternal investment

Definition: Anne Campbell was a prominent evolutionary psychologist most noted for her work examining sex differences in aggression and her ethnographic studies of female gang members.

Introduction

Anne Campbell received her Doctorate in Experimental Psychology at Oxford in 1977. Two years later, Campbell began researching female gang members by living in New York City and talking with members of three gangs. She published her findings in her book *Girls in the Gang*. In February of 2017, Anne Campbell passed away, but her research on sex differences in aggression and on the intrasexual aggression of women continues to inspire others (Cross, 2017).

Anne Campbell's work in the field of evolutionary psychology primarily focused on intrasexual aggression among women and female gang members. Campbell was one of the first evolutionary psychologists to articulate that women engage in less direct aggression than men, not only because there are fewer incentives for this behavior among women relative to men, but also because of women's vital role as a caregiver and the threat posed to that role by their involvement in direct aggression (Campbell, 1999). This theoretical insight generated many empirical studies examining sex differences in aggression, competition, violence, and mating strategies. Campbell is also well known for her ethnographic work that she conducted while observing three different female gangs in New York. This work shed light on the motivations for women's involvement in gangs, which had previously been largely ignored by researchers whose

primary focus was on male gang members (Campbell, 1984). This entry provides an overview of the research accomplishments of Anne Campbell throughout her career.

Sex Differences in Aggression

A large literature in social and evolutionary psychology has documented marked sex differences in aggression (e.g., Archer, 2009; Campbell, 1999). For example, research has shown that across cultures, males use more direct aggression than females from the age of two, onward. Early theorizing in evolutionary psychology explained these sex differences as the result of distinct mating strategies among males and females that incentivize aggressive and violent competition for access to mating opportunities among men, but not women (Archer, 2009; Daly & Wilson, 1988). A primary contribution made by Campbell was the theoretical argument that women's relatively lower levels of aggressive behavior could be attributed not only to reduced incentives relative to men, but additionally to an increased cost of aggressive behavior owing to women's primary and essential role as a caregiver.

Campbell used parental investment theory (Trivers, 1972) as a foundation to explain why females are less likely to participate in direct aggression. She argued that women not only invest in their offspring more than men, but also that this investment is absolutely essential to the survival of her offspring. Studies have indicated that the death of the mother can increase the likelihood of her infant's death by a factor of five, whereas the death of the infant's father increases the offspring's mortality likelihood by a factor of three. Other studies report a child mortality of 100% following the death of the mother (Campbell, 1999). Because females are vital to the survival of their offspring they must protect themselves in order to ensure that their offspring survive. As a result, engagement in physical aggression is often too risky for females,

as their offspring's life depends on the mother's survival. Additionally, although intrasexual competition and aggression among women could allow women to compete for higher *quality* mates, the advantages of acquiring a greater *quantity* of mates is much reduced owing to women's large investment in each offspring and the reduced reproductive capacity that this investment constrains. However, for males, the benefits of intrasexual aggression typically outweigh the costs. This is owing to the fact that the costs of aggression are less steep (the survival of their young does not depend on their own survival) and the benefits are greater because men's intrasexual aggression, if successful, can yield both a higher quality and quantity of mating opportunities. Additionally, a man's decision to opt out of aggressive competition with other men for mating opportunities could result in his complete exclusion from the mating market.

Campbell therefore argued that although there are benefits to be had for women engaging in intrasexual competition (e.g., increased quality of mates, stronger mate retention), competition involving direct aggression that would put women at risk of injury or death, would be avoided as a means of protecting oneself and one's offspring. Campbell supported this argument with evidence of sex differences in aggressive acts. For example, she noted that as the type of aggressive act increases in terms of direct violence, the gap in sex differences also increases, as women do not tend to participate in the riskier aggressive acts (Campbell, 1999). Campbell also noted that women think more carefully about the potential consequences of impulsive actions (including aggressive acts), which may discourage them from participating in these actions. Women are less impulsive due to the necessity of their survival in order to take care of their young. Indeed, females must not only consider their own survival, but also the survival of their offspring (Cross, Copping, & Campbell, 2011).

These sex differences in aggression are not explained by sex differences in experienced anger. Indeed, research by Campbell (2006) illustrates that men and women experience similar levels of anger in response to physical danger. Rather, what appears to down-regulate women's aggressive behavior is their experience of fear. Campbell argues that fear may act as an emotional inhibitor of direct aggression by women, thereby reducing their risk of incurring serious injury. For example, females report more fear of physical harm than males. Women may be more fearful of physical harm due to their role in the survival of their young. These findings support Campbell's maternal investment theory (Campbell 1999; Campbell, 2006). However, there are occurrences when the risks of nonaggression outweigh the benefits of nonaggressive actions. For example, research suggests that oxytocin has a role in the reduction of fear in mothers during an attack on their young. In this instance, the overriding of the fear response is necessary, as the mother must put her life at risk by retaliating if she is to ensure the survival of her offspring. Oxytocin can also promote affiliative behavior in women. Instead of demonstrating a "fight or flight" response, females will often request help and protection from other females. By bonding with other females, mothers are able to protect themselves and, therefore, their offspring (Campbell, 2008).

Although men tend to participate in more direct aggression than females, women and men have a similar age-assault curve, wherein violence is more prevalent during their teenage years (Campbell, 1995). This research suggests that the motivation for aggression in both males and females is the same: the elimination of romantic rivals. During the teenage years, both males and females are entering their reproductive prime and are primarily motivated by the desire to secure potential mates. However, due to the maternal investment instinct that women possess, they are disinclined to use aggressive and violent behaviors to compete for those mating

opportunities which may result in bodily harm, relative to men. Women, instead, are more likely to use indirect aggression, such as the verbal derogation of competitors in order to appear superior to their romantic rivals. This aggressive behavior is typically expressed indirectly, such as through gossip, rather than verbal derogation directed directly toward a romantic rival. This behavior is used in order to shield the aggressor's identity, which will protect the aggressor from retaliation. This tactic is useful to women, who wish to protect themselves in order to care for their offspring. However, indirect aggression is less advantageous for men, as they must appeal to potential mates by demonstrating their dominance over other men in a more direct and public fashion (Campbell, 1995; Campbell, 1999; Campbell, 2004). Campbell's emphasis on the important role of maternal investment added much more depth and predictive power to the traditional evolutionary framework for explaining sex differences in intrasexual aggression. These insights continue to play an important role in the work of many evolutionary psychologists.

Female Gang Members

Although there has been a fair amount of research on gangs and their members, very few researchers have systematically examined the role that women play in their involvement in gangs. When researchers did examine female gang members, it was often to explain the way in which male gang members viewed them. This research sorted female members into different categories, such as "Sex Objects" and "Tomboys," but did not reduce male gang members to such labels. Campbell was one of the first researchers to directly examine the experiences and motivations of female gang members. In order to do so, Campbell spent six months in New York

engaged in intensive observations of, and interviews with, three different gangs: The Sandman Ladies, The Sex Girls, and The Five Percent Nation.

Campbell applied the same evolutionary background when researching female gang members as she did when studying aggression in other females. She noted that most of the aggressive actions demonstrated by female gang members were performed in order to appeal to or guard mates. Additionally, although female gang members are more likely to use violence than other women, the pattern of aggression still fits that which was described above. That is, female gang members tend to use indirect aggression rather than direct aggression in order to shield their identity and protect themselves and their young. Seeking mates is especially important for female gang members, as most join gangs in order to escape poverty by finding a mate who will provide financial security and protection for the woman and any offspring she may have. Because these women depend so heavily on their partners, they engage in intense competition with other women in order to guard their mate from rivals. Female members enact these mate-guarding behaviors by using indirect aggression in order to derogate rivals. Indeed, most of the aggressive behaviors demonstrated by female members are directed against romantic rivals. When direct aggression is used by females, the fights are less likely to include firearms than male gang fights, demonstrating the less violent nature of female intrasexual fights. One especially common reason for fighting is due to the female gang member's need to protect her reputation or integrity. These fights may also occur due to the member's desire to defend the honor of her child or her partner (Campbell, 1984; Campbell, 1991).

Conclusion

Anne Campbell made many contributions to the literature on gangs and to the field of evolutionary psychology, especially regarding sex differences in intrasexual aggression. In particular, Campbell's research gave voice to the female psychology of aggression— a topic that had been taken for granted as simply the inverse of men's psychology. This research was achieved through her ground-breaking theoretical advancements as well as her rigorous empirical and observational research. The research that she conducted continues to inspire researchers and provides fertile ground for the generation of new research ideas.

Cross References

Urban Gangs

Intrasexual Rivalry Among Women

Verbal Derogation Among Women

Sex Differences in Same-Sex Aggression

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