

Study Title: CULTURE AND VIOLENCE IN RURAL AMERICA

Performance Sites: St. Helena and Pointe Coupee Parishes

Principal Investigator: Matthew R. Lee  
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Contact Hours: 8am to 3:30 pm Monday to Friday

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to collect information from individual respondents on perceptions of local values, norms, religious behaviors, acceptability of violence, social ties and activities, and standard demographics.

**Subjects:** Eligible subjects include adults greater than 18 years of age who are currently residents of either St. Helena or Pointe Coupee Parishes.

The anticipated number of subjects is about 200.

Script read directly to respondent.

“We are conducting a survey of residents of St. Helena/Pointe Coupee Parishes. This survey is being conducted by members of the Department of Sociology at Louisiana State University. This survey asks questions about various aspects of community participation, including religious and non-religious activities. It also asks about your perceptions of the acceptability of violence under a variety of conditions. It is designed to help social scientists better understand the similarities and differences between your community and others that we are comparing it to. There are no known risks to completing this survey. Any information you give us will be kept completely confidential unless release is legally compelled, and you are free to terminate the interview at any time, or to refuse to answer any questions during the course of the interview. “

“The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews,

Chairman, LSU Institutional Review Board, (225)578-8692. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the researchers' obligation to provide me with a copy of this consent form if signed by me.”

Signature

Date

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**\*\*This copy to be signed and given to the respondent for their personal records.**

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Signature

Date

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**\*\*This copy to be signed and kept by the interviewer for filing with the Rural Culture and Violence project records.**

**Interviewer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section A: Demographic and Background Information**

**We are going to begin with some basic questions about you and your family.**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Where you and your family are from, where you work, and so forth?

[Probes:

Age/date of birth

Race

Occupation

Education

Marital Status

Number of kids and gender of kids

If they are from the area, how long has their family lived in this parish or region.]

Spouses Occupation

Spouses Education

Parents education

Parents occupation

**Section B: Religious cultural orientation**

**Now we are going to ask you a few questions about religion.**

2. What is your religious denomination, if any? Could you please describe some of the main beliefs of your religion as you see it. [Probe for length of time R has been with denomination - convert or lifetime member; were parents or guardians members of this denomination; literalist interpretations of bible; relationship between God and man, and man and man; Is god punitive or compassionate]

3. Do you ever attend church? About how frequently? Can you please describe your congregation in terms of its size, the race of most members, and whether it is mostly older, middle-aged, younger people, or a good mix. [Probe for length of time congregation has been around; has R changed congregations or been with this one for most of their life; does R's

extended family attend this congregation; do most of R's friends and acquaintances attend this congregation;]

4. Does your congregation have any type of activities, aside from regular Sunday services, that **you** participate in? [Clarification: examples may include poverty relief, festivals, and so forth]. If so, could you please describe what these activities are, who is involved, where they occur, and how frequently they occur, in as much detail as possible. [Probe: try to get as many examples as possible]

How important would you say these activities are to you? Why? [Probe: do they make R feel integrated socially; do they make R feel like they are helping the congregation; do they make R feel like they are helping the broader community or other members of community]

5. Does your congregation have any type of activities, aside from regular Sunday services, that **you do not** participate in? If so, could you please describe what these activities are, who is involved, where they occur, and how frequently they occur, in as much detail as possible. [Clarification: since they do not participate in these things they may have only limited knowledge of the activities].

### **Section C: Secular Cultural Orientation**

6. Are there any other types of clubs, groups, or regular social activities that you participate in on a regular basis that are not associated with your church [Probe: garden clubs, book clubs, sports groups, political associations, unions, charity work, women's auxiliary, Masonic lodge, etc.]? If so, could you please describe what these activities are, who is involved, where they occur, and how frequently they occur, in as much detail as possible.

How important would you say these activities are to you? Why? [Probe: do they make R feel integrated socially; do they make R feel like they are helping the group; do they make R feel like they are helping the broader community or other members of community]

7. Would you say most people in your community trust each other or not? Why? [Probe: what is the cause of the trust or distrust; be aware of race or class dimensions]. Can you give some examples that you have seen recently that you think show how people mostly do or do not trust each other around here?

### **Section D: Conventional Cultural Integration**

8. Do you have some goals in your life that you would like to achieve? If so, what are they? Are there any specific circumstances that are helping you to achieve those goals at this time in your life? If so, what are those specific circumstances?

Are there any circumstances that are keeping you from achieving these goals at this time in your life? If so, what are those specific circumstances?

9. What do the terms status and respect mean to you? How important are getting status and respect from other people to you? From whom? Why?

10. What specific activities does a person from your peer group in your immediate community have to do to get respect and status from the people that they interact with on a regular basis? How do these things get them status and respect?

### **Section E: Tolerance of Violence**

**Now I am going to give you some situations, and I am going to describe different ways that they may be handled. I am then going to ask you to evaluate which response was appropriate according to your personal view, and why. I want to make clear that there is no right or wrong answer here that we are looking for. Instead, we are interested in your personal view of the issue.**

#### **Vignette 1**

Tom is married and the father of two children. He wakes up in the middle of the night because he hears a noise downstairs. When he goes downstairs, he locks the door to the upstairs where his family is sleeping behind him. He then goes to the living room, where he sees an adult male burglar. The burglar does not see Tom.

In scenario 1, Tom quietly turns around, goes back upstairs, while locking the door behind him, and calls the police.

In scenario 2, Tom pulls his pistol out of a nearby drawer and shoots the burglar. He then goes and calls the police.

In your personal view, in which scenario do you think Tom did the appropriate thing? Please explain why.

In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

#### **Vignette 2**

Jim's neighbor Ed and his friends keep parking their cars in front of Jim's house, blocking his driveway. Jim has asked Ed several times not to park there, and Ed has refused to ask his friends to park somewhere else. Jim has even called the police, who said there was nothing they could do about it. The next time one of Ed's friends parks in front of his driveway

Scenario 1: Jim simply drives across his own lawn to get around the vehicle.

Scenario 2: Jim goes next door to Ed's house, and asks him one last time to move the vehicle. When Ed refuses, Jim hits him with a closed fist several times in the head and body.

In your personal view, in which scenario do you think Jim did the appropriate thing? Please explain why.

In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

### **Vignette 3**

Gary and his wife are walking to their car after a dinner in the early evening. On the way to the car, a man in the parking lot makes sexually suggestive remarks to Gary's wife.

Scenario 1. Gary and his wife ignore the man and go to their car, where they leave to go home.

Scenario 2. Gary approaches the man, and without warning punches the man in the face.

In your personal view, in which scenario do you think Gary did the appropriate thing? Please explain why.

In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

#### **Vignette 4**

Gary and his wife are walking to their car after a movie, and there are 8 other people with them that they know. Most of these people are their close friends or their co-workers. On the way to the car, a male stranger in the parking lot makes sexually suggestive remarks to Gary's wife in front of everyone.

Scenario 1. Gary and his wife ignore the man and go to their car, where they leave to go home.

Scenario 2. Gary approaches the man, and without warning punches the man in the face.

In your personal view, in which scenario do you think Gary did the appropriate thing? Please explain why.

In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

#### **Vignette 5**

Jeff is a single 30 year old male who lives alone, and owns a small business in his town. Jeff receives a telephone call from a former employee that he fired one week ago. The former employee says to Jeff "I know where you live, and I am coming to get you."

Scenario 1. Jeff calls the police immediately and reports the situation, giving them the other mans name and address.

Scenario 2. Jeff decides to handle the situation himself. When he gets home, he takes his shotgun out of its case, loads it, and puts it near the front door in his home.

In your personal view, in which scenario do you think Jeff did the appropriate thing? Please explain why.

In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

#### **Vignette 6**

George has lost his job, and needs money to pay the rent on his apartment or he will be evicted. Unable to find work, and getting desperate, George takes his pistol and goes to a gas station. There he threatens the cashier with the gun, and eventually shoots him in the leg to make the attendant give him the money.

Do you consider this an acceptable use of violence. Why or why not?

Do you think most people in your community would consider this an acceptable use of violence?  
Why

### **Vignette 7**

John is driving home with his daughter in the car with him. Another motorist starts honking his horn at John and making obscene gestures to him. Then the other motorist bumps John's car with his own vehicle.

Scenario 1. John ignores the other driver and slows down to let the other driver get ahead and away from him.

Scenario 2. John signals for the other driver to pull over to the side of the road, and gets out and physically assaults the other driver.

In your personal view, in which scenario do you think John did the appropriate thing? Please explain why.

In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

### **Vignette 8**

Bill is at home with his family on a Saturday afternoon. A troublesome neighbor from up the street knocks on the door and asks Bill to come outside. Looking out the window, Bill sees that the man has a pistol on his belt.

Scenario 1. Bill does not answer the door and goes to call the police.

Scenario 2. Bill gets his own gun and goes outside, prepared to use it against the neighbor who is on his property.

In your personal view, in which scenario do you think Bill did the appropriate thing? Please explain why.

In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

### **Vignette 9: Respondent Provided Vignette**

Are there any situations in which you can imagine a man hitting an adult male stranger?

Please describe them in as much detail as possible.

**Vignette 10: Respondent Provided Vignette**

Are there any situations in which you can imagine a man shooting and killing an adult male stranger? Please describe them in as much detail as possible.

That completes the interview. I would like to thank you for your time and your insights. We will be happy to mail a copy of our final report to you in a year or so if you would like to provide us with your mailing address.

Interview Schedule Version 2

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**Interviewee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:**

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Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Occupation

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Spouses Occupation

Spouses Education

Parents education

Parents occupation

**Section B: Religious cultural orientation**

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How important would you say these activities are to you? Why? [Probe: do they make R feel integrated socially; do they make R feel like they are helping the congregation; do they make R feel like they are helping the broader community or other members of community]

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9. What do the terms status and respect mean to you? How important are getting status and respect from other people to you? From Whom? Why?

10. What specific activities does a person from your peer group in your immediate community have to do to get respect and status from the people that they interact with on a regular basis? How do these things get them status and respect?

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**Now I am going to give you some situations, and I am going to ask you to complete the scenario that you are given based on what your response would be, and why. I want to make clear that there is no right or wrong answer here that we are looking for. Instead, we are interested in your personal view of the issue.**

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What does Tom do?  
Please explain why.

How would most people in your community have responded?  
Please explain why?

#### **Vignette 2**

Jim's neighbor Ed and his friends keep parking their cars in front of Jim's house, blocking his driveway. Jim has asked Ed several times not to park there, and Ed has refused to ask his friends to park somewhere else. Jim has even called the police, who said there was nothing they could do about it. The next time one of Ed's friends parks in front of his driveway, what does Jim do? Please explain why.

How would most people in your community have responded?  
Please explain why?

#### **Vignette 3**

Gary and his wife are walking to their car after a dinner in the early evening. On the way to the car, a man in the parking lot makes sexually suggestive remarks to Gary's wife. What does Gary do in response? Please explain why.

How would most people in your community have responded?  
Please explain why?

#### **Vignette 4**

Gary and his wife are walking to their car after a movie, and there are 8 other people with them that they know. Most of these people are their close friends or their co-workers. On the way to the car, a male stranger in the parking lot makes sexually suggestive remarks to Gary's wife in front of everyone. What does Gary do in response? Please explain why.

How would most people in your community have responded?  
Please explain why?

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What would most people in your community have done?  
Please explain why?

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In which way do you think most people in your community would have responded? Why?

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