Katz’s Explanation of Righteous Slaughter

Three features of this form of murder

1. frequently a self-righteous act associated with the defense of communal values
2. typically occurs without premeditation in the heat of the moment (related concept of trivial altercation)—occurring within a quickly developing rage
3. arbitrary relationship between the behaviour and the outcome

Katz’s Three Part explanation

1. The would-be killer must interpret the act as coming out of a situation that requires a ‘last stand’ in defense of his or her basic worth (p. 18)
2. A peculiar emotional process occurs in which humiliation is re-formed into a rage (p. 19)
3. The would-be killer must organize his/her behaviour through acts that respond emotionally to the previous humiliation through acts of physical violence and cursing—what he calls acts akin to sacrifice—to "honour" the offense

Some Evidence from Respectability’s Last Stand: Homicide studies suggest that

: the roles of victim versus perpetrator often changed or reversed over the period of the conflict
: a recurrent feature of such murders is "victim precipitation"
: "victims" are not trying to escape
: often an audience of close acquaintances escalates the conflict
where? Such murders occur in casual or informal settings-in families, at social occasions
when? Mostly on the weekends when people are otherwise not working but are in intimate settings
in a majority of Wolfgang’s cases, the parties to the conflict had been drinking
the settings and relationships provide little in the way of "escape routes"

The Emotional Part of the Explanation (P. 23)
in lived experience, humiliation and rage are closely related
humiliation and rage inversely reflect one another
righteousness is not the product of rage, it’s more like the stepping stone out of humiliation
humiliation is the loss of status and respectability; it’s a stigma, a sign of social impotence
humiliation is not the same as shame in that people who are shamed by others may not feel shame, but humiliation has a moral bite
"rage is a sophisticated incompetence"–deaf and dumb in the sense that it’s deaf to reason and dumb in the sense of being inarticulate
rage focuses consciousness on the hear and now, and intensifies the situational conflict, and magnifies the details

The Acts of Violence themselves
‘the practical objective of those who kill is not necessarily to take a life’
the "dark figure of crime" suggests that for every completed murder, there are thousands of "could-be"
murders that terminate in assault — or even terminate in verbal conflict
: other evidence suggests that attacks frequently continue after the victim has been killed
: the attacks appear to be aimed at obliterating the source of humiliation, and recovering respectability
: the phenomenological "logic" of the attack: marking the offense in sacrifice—"constructing the truth of the injury"
: the phenomenological "logic" of cursing/swearing = casting a spell to degrade the others, making them look repulsive, evil, immoral, worthless — and justifying the rage — threats like omens
: the logic of "physical" attack — getting beneath the surface of everyday personas to bones and blood (p. 38)
: shouting, pushing and shoving may be an intermediate step that paves the wave for more lethal violence (p. 40)

Four Problems to consider:
1. What can we make of the evidence of prior offenses (p. 38)
2. What can we make of the cases where offenders "stand-down"? (p. 40-41)
3. Why is Violence/Murder NOT inevitable? (p. 42 — 2 points)
4. Is the focus on the lived experience tautological?

Phenomenal Foreground and Structural Background
1. What are the Social Class Differences and how do they make sense?
   : there is a statistical association between low SES and impassioned murder
is this because of deficits in the low SES specific deficits among the poor or specific protective structures among the middle and upper classes? (differences in the available escape routes? or differences in the way classes experience humiliation?)

2. What are the gender differences and how do they make sense?

- 80% of homicides in US committed by men but the data for "family homicides" tell another story that suggests more equitable patterns of murder (p.47)
- Some evidence suggests that the rationale for females who kill spouses is related to partner violence, and the woman’s traditional role as homemaker
- Frequently females who kill experience amnesia ("blackout") of the event