Life Histories, Blood Revenge, and Warfare in a Tribal Population

The Ultimate Causes of Yanomamö Warfare
Blood revenge:

- Blood revenge defined "retaliatory killing in which the initial victim’s close kinsmen conduct a revenge raid on the members of the current community of the initial killer. Although Yanomamö raiders always hope to dispatch the original killer, almost any member of the attacked community is a suitable target."
How the “Cycle of Revenge” begins

“Most fights begin over sexual issues: infidelity and suspicion of infidelity, attempts to seduce another man's wife, sexual jealousy, forcible appropriation of women from visiting groups, failure to give a promised girl in marriage, and (rarely) rape” (986).
Levels of violence

- 44% of men 25 and older have participated in a killing.
- 60% of men, however, who have killed have participated in 1 killing.
- 66% of those older than 41 have lost at least one close kin in violent death (cousin to half-cousin range minimum).
- While 57% of the same age-group have lost two or more.
- Depending on the area, 15% to 30% of men who reach the age of 18 will die violently.
Hypothetical benefits of warfare:

- Group and individual:
  - Kin groups who gain a reputation for swift retaliation will deter others from taking advantage of them (deterrence theory)
  - Individuals who exact revenge may have higher reproductive or marital success than those who do not.
Some results

- *Unokais* have higher marital success than *non-unokai* men (1.63 wives thru lifetime versus 0.63 for *non-unokais*).

- *Unokais* have higher reproductive success (or fertility) than *non-unokais* (4.91 to 1.59).

- *Non-unokais* don’t have higher death rates than *unokais*, therefore *non-unokais* are not being killed off at a higher rates which reduces their fertility.

- No evidence that *unokais* loose fewer kinsmen than *non-unokais* which suggests that *unokais* cannot better protect their kinsmen.