

New research is first to explore regional differences in US serial killings

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Did you know that people living in the Western region of the United States are more likely to become victims of a serial killer than people living in the Northeast? The February issue of *Homicide Studies*, published by SAGE, is the first to explore research looking at the considerable interstate and regional differences in serial killer activity.

The study led by University of Connecticut Emeritus Sociology Professor James DeFronzo examined male serial killers in the United States from 1970 to 1992 using sociological perspectives long used to understand other crimes.

The study found that social structural factors, such as the percentage of a state's urban population, divorced residents, one-person households and unemployed residents, all helped to explain why some states and regions are home to more male serial killers. The study also found that cultural factors, such as a high ratio of executions to homicides and classification as a southern state, correlated with a higher rate of serial killers.

"Experts traditionally have used psychiatric analyses to understand male serial killer activity, but that approach has not been able to explain the considerable geographic differences that exist with serial killings," said DeFronzo, who led a team of researchers from UConn, Northeastern University, Villanova University and Massey University. "This appears to be the first study to show that both cultural and social structural factors play a role."

Source: SAGE Publications

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