

Third-party punishment is not confined to “complex” societies: across 60 societies we find substantial ethnographic evidence for 3PP, with weak or inconsistent support for the idea that institutional development is a prerequisite for punitive enforcement.

When socioecological predictors do matter, they seem to matter for types of punishment more than for punishment writ large: technological/social differentiation is the one predictor that cleanly aligns with generalized third-party punishment, while kinship intensity is most plausibly linked to kin-structured third-party enforcement.