

# Example of term paper on domestic violence

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



## **Introduction**

Domestic violence is considered a serious offense that regularly happens around the globe. It has indeed been confirmed that its major causes comprise physical, psychological, mental, and sexual forms of distress inflicted upon by the absolute abuser over their victims. This paper focuses on the analysis of the comprehensive conceptual structure of domestic violence with a major purpose of bringing sufficient understanding of these elements. The paper will involve a basic yet robust foundation upon which domestic violence will be understood, thereby advancing past and present debates regarding justice systems and their response to numerous domestic violence transgressions. This article progresses its reason in two major parts.

The first part seeks to analyze the fifteen sociological concepts that constitute domestic violence. It does this by unveiling an explanatory model of domestic violence based on three key elements: domesticity, violence, and structural inequality (Bancroft and Jay 24). The fifteen concepts fall in any of these three major elements, forming the basis of explaining as well as critiquing some of the leading descriptions of domestic violence. The concepts as outlined include: (a)

The second part of this article covers three major theoretical perspectives on which the above thirteen sociological concepts of domestic violence are based. These three theories are conflict, symbolic-interactionism, and structural functionalism theories. Each of these theories is discussed in details in what they constitute and address. The above theories are taken as an important starting point while addressing domestic violence problem. This

is because they provide three basic schools of thoughts that add up to a variety in solutions given by most sociologists in response to challenges posed by domestic violence.

The fifteen sociological concepts involve in domestic violence emanate from a model, which is based on three major elements (Andrews and James 10). These elements are described as the basic foundation on which any purposeful solution can be determined. This model of domestic violence presents a philosophical analysis of how domestic violence is, and gives a responsive framework for explaining and critiquing various accounts of the topic. The model is presented in the form of four spheres. Three of these spheres intersect at certain points, representing the three major elements of domesticity, violence, and structural inequality. Further, each of the three spheres signifies an assortment of acts or happenings that are characterized in the following manner: ' violent acts', ' acts happening in a domestic context', and ' acts that tend to perpetuate structural inequality'. The fourth sphere usually cuts across the rest of the spheres, representing acts that are either considered illegitimate or legitimate. The fourth sphere delineates moral illegitimacy and any act deemed to be legitimate falls outside the sphere. On the other hand, those acts deemed to be illegitimate fall within this fourth sphere (Hutchinson 5).

**The model describes clearly delineates the following sociological concepts in domestic violence as well as their characteristics:**

- Social norms: these are rules and/or expectations that define behavior within a definite social or cultural group. These norms function as the basic

tenets of what may be referred to as appropriate or inappropriate behavior and what is (and/or not) acceptable. The social norms thus contribute greatly to how interactions amongst individuals are coordinated. These norms exist in a society because of the preference by individuals to obey the rules, given that others will follow suit. Various external, as well as internal factors (or pressures), are thought to control these social norms; they, therefore, prevent any individual from violating them through threats such as disapproval or punishment by the society. However, different social norms may uphold various forms of violence, particularly domestic violence. For instance, traditional conservative beliefs that men do have control over women physically may lead to women becoming vulnerable to domestic violence.

- Conflict avoidance: this sociological concept seeks to define channels that address the challenges that may arise in domestic violence. It, therefore, creates a balance or equilibrium that maintains social functions in a state of balance. The maintenance of social balance seeks to benefit the entire society.

- Power: more often than not, the society is considered to be in a state of conflict. This conflict mostly occurs externally to the knowledge of many if not all. The conflict occurs mostly due to uneven distribution of power and wealth. Of particular importance is the power, which tends to be the bone of contention in the society. Power is specifically defined as the ability to acquire what is desired particularly in full view and knowledge of an opponent. Power can be packaged as a weapon to violence, especially in reference to domestic violence. When, for instance, a power struggle

between intimate partners ensues the result will be most likely domestic violence.

- Culture: this concept delineates such rules as the social norms that are important in defining what stands as acceptable, appropriate or otherwise in a societal context. They run concurrently with the social norms (discussed earlier) in coordinating interactions between individuals in the society. Certain cultural aspects are considered unworthy, especially when the culture advocates for acceptance of violent acts. In many cultures, for instance, many victims of domestic and sexual violence feel stigmatized and therefore choose not to report such acts. Culture, therefore, plays a very important role in defining what a society ought to stand for.

- Identity: identity as a sociological concept addresses the components within an individual in relation to the society. It defines who a particular individual is, their functions in the society, and what they stand for. When individuals feel lowly placed, they may resort to using violence as an alternative to the low-self esteem feeling. Such violence may be in the form of domestic violence to their partners or family members or even any member of the society.

- Social status: this concept defines the position of an individual in the society. When individuals are not recognized as they may like, they may often engage in domestic violence so as to 'cushion' themselves against such feeling of low self-esteem.

- Authority: this social concept addresses social balance in terms of power in a society. In order to maintain social cohesiveness, authority needs to be equally felt across every gender. Failure to this, domestic violence is likely to

result since the aggrieved parties react to their denial of authority by the abusers.

- Values: in any particular society, values are meant to steer individuals and the entire community along channels that are considered safe and appropriate, and which act as the standard for societal behavior. When such values are not transferred to the younger generations or when they cease to abound, violence erupts as a replacement for this. This is the basis of domestic violence.

- Taboo: this concept refers to certain restrictions or limitations happening in the society as a result of cultural beliefs. For instance, most traditional beliefs have it that it is wrong for women to address men rudely. In case this happens, men are given the mandate to punish women physically; this becomes a classical example of domestic violence.

- Social structure: this defines the social evenness or otherwise of power distribution in the society. Social structure must be maintained in a state of balance so that social evenness is achieved; failure to maintain the social structure in an equilibrium results in systems that enhance violence, domestic violence included.

- Social control: entails such regulating points in the society as institutionalized power. Social control may act negatively to enhance violence, though unintended in many cases. Institutionalized power may be abused willingly, though, resulting in the likelihood of violence (especially domestic violence).

- Situations: different situations call for different actions. Though this concept may be described as an empty concept, it still holds water when it comes to

culture and/or social norms. Situations such as lack of proper control of power and authority will most likely lead to violence. Such situations may provide loopholes for domestic violence to occur as well.

- Laws: the absence or presence of laws in a society determines whether there is order or lack of it in that society. More often, lack of order and legal structures lead to violence as opposed to when there are order and legal systems concerned with the eradication of violence.

Having considered these concepts, it would be critical to consider the theoretical perspectives on which these concepts are based. These theories, as mentioned earlier, include symbolic-interactionism, structural functionalism, and social conflict theories. Conflict theory has the description of a society as an entity in a state of eternal conflict and competition for inadequate resources. This theory states that individuals with immense wealth continue to increase their riches at the expense of the poor. This creates a societal power struggle, which is often won by the wealthy (Hutchinson 15). In the same manner, marriage as a social institution contains resources which may not be properly distributed. Such resources include money, jobs, and reputation. In the event that one party lacks a resource they feel is important to them, an inferiority complex feeling sets in, leading to domestic conflicts. Increased conflicts in such cases result in abusive behavior and consequently domestic violence. This happens to compensate for the “ inferior” ego.

The structural functionalism theory has it that the society is in a continuous state of equilibrium. This equilibrium is thought to be maintained throughout the society (Hutchinson 20). According to this theory, women are supposed

to hold communicative (or expressive) roles in the society while the men occupy the influential positions within the same society. When the equilibrium is disturbed - such as when men fail to occupy such roles as the theory determines - domestic violence sets in as an alternative to holding these positions or roles. This theory thus advocates for basic schooling of children in a nuclear family in order to support systems of the society and the government as well. The families in the society depend on schools for the right upbringing of their children. Failure of the learning institutions and nuclear families to execute their duties appropriately leads to domestic violence.

The symbolic-interactionism theory comes in handy in influencing people to understand and trust one another. The theory holds that there exist persistent interactions amongst all those people who tend to share symbols and meanings. It is thus an important theory which seeks to help understand as well as improve relationships and interactions. For instance, partners who are in an intimate relationship have to understand the view points of others through the application of this theory; this means that they have to be based on a common stand. Such understanding is also much needed in marriages; otherwise domestic violence will erupt (Bancroft and Jay 26).

## **Conclusion**

The major point that emerges in any form of domestic violence is misunderstanding as a result of inferiority. When one person feels inferior to the other, they normally result to conflicts or other acts leading to domestic violence. Though the three theories described in this article address different perspectives or facets of domestic violence, one critical element is important



in all: mutual understanding. On the other hand, it is imperative for the learning systems and nuclear tenets of the families to bring up children responsibly so that they will also replicate the same in the future. In any case, domestic violence happening at the level of parents will emotionally affect the children negatively. This also affects the way in which they will handle their intimate relationships in the future. Therefore, peace is critical in any attempt to bring up children who will be responsible in the future. Though the concepts and theories explain to a greater detail on domestic violence, they are not really a guideline on how to describe problems that constitute domestic violence. Further research into the matter ought to be conducted to ascertain the true nature of domestic violence. This is because the theories do not comprehensively address this issue yet.

## **Bibliography**

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