

# Domestic violence and criminal theories



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Psychological Theory Explanation to Domestic Violence Conventional approaches to domestic violence can be categorized in psychoanalytic theories; family and systems theories; social theories; feminist theories; and, cognitive behavioral theories. The paper employs attachment theory to investigate domestic violence and seeks to elaborate on why abusive relationships persist. Psychological theories to domestic violence have highlighted diverse psychopathologies within the perpetrator, inclusive of elements such as self-esteem, antisocial tendencies, the lack of impulse control, and the impacts of substance abuse. This has contributed to blaming on the recipients personal maladjustment, instead of a relationship dynamic.

#### Psychodynamic Theories of domestic Violence: Attachment Theory

Attachment theory does not necessarily place much emphasis on the individual's mental representation of a relationship, but rather highlights the reciprocity between individuals within relationships. Attachment represents an instinctive motivating force that enables secure dependency, which, in turn, complements autonomy. The accessibility and responsiveness of the attachment figure is central to the securing of binds via emotional engagement and the development of trust (Bartholomew, Henderson and Dutton 43). When attachment behavior fails to manifest, separation distress may arise whereby the insecure models may recreate insecure patterns within adult relationships (Fisher and Steven 373).

According to the pioneers of attachment theory, an infant establishes a "working model" of what can be anticipated from his/her primary caregiver. In the event that a caregiver persist in responding in expected ways, the infant's model persists; nevertheless, in the event that caregiver's responses become constantly erratic, the infant may be compelled to alter or revise

his/her model, and consequently, the security of the attachment changes (Godbout, Dutton, Lussier and Sabourin 365).

Children construct a representation of their own value guided by their experiences and opinions of the caregiver's capability, availability, and willingness to avail care and protection. Nevertheless, not all attachment are positive and despite the fact that secure attachments are desired and most evident (60-75%), avoidant, disorganized/disoriented, and ambivalent attachments can also develop amid parent-child relationships that are less predictable (Waters and Cummings 164).

Attachment theory stipulates that child abuse yields insecure and anxious attachment, which can be ambivalent, avoidant, or disorganized/disorganized. Anxious attachment is linked to later social and emotional problems and is highly linked to emanate from situations of maltreatment. Unfortunately, the distorted patterns of relating to others lay the basis for the child's model of the world, impact on the manner in which the child responds, and may thwart the child from establishing a positive internal model of self (Sable 21).

Research findings indicate that antisocial behavior may be connected to early adverse family experiences, especially centering on the patterns of insecure attachment. Several studies have also highlighted that insecure attachment manifests frequent in populations of children who have experienced physical abuse or neglect. The perpetrators of domestic violence usually present with a history of attachment disorders rendered by abuse, domestic violence within childhood, and neglect. Findings corroborated by several studies indicate that the bulk perpetrators of domestic violence manifest insecure attachment demonstrated that the

subjects manifest a dismissing attachment, a preoccupied attachment, and a disorganized attachment (Dutton 80).

In conclusion, attachment theory avails an alternative perspective on domestic violence by awarding a deeper explanation compared to previous conventional explanations. Domestic violence perpetrators usually manifest higher rates of attachment insecurity compared to the general population and that incorporating attachment theory into the realm of psychology of perpetrators may eventually aid in devising interventions that facilitate the process of “earned security.” Some of the studies prove that batterers embody a heterogeneous constituent and that varying interventions may be essential for diverse clients in regulating attachment distress.

#### Works Cited

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