

From an evolutionary perspective, what are the ultimate explanations for murder?

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Why humans murder other humans is a question of insightful concern and practical importance, one that needs a successful scientific explanation. Evolutionary theory has explanations of why murder occurs, the circumstances in which it occurs, and the psychological mechanisms dedicated to murder. Murder is unlawful killing of another human being. As William Blackstone stated the common law definition of murder is 'when a person, of sound memory and discretion, unlawfully killeth any reasonable creature in being and under the king's peace, with malice aforethought, either express or implied'.

A person kills for a number of reasons. Gang members kill rival gang members for a higher status among their community, more respect in their gang resulting in them getting more sexual partners.

Thieves kill their victim incase that person cause them trouble in the future. Husbands kill their wives for having an affair or been expected of having an affair. They kill their wives incase their wife reproduces children with a rival male. Children are abused by people that have too much anger or people that may have been abused in there own childhood; they do this to make themselves feel inferior.

Children may also be abused and murdered by step-parents more often than biological parents, as in evolutionary psychology these children are no good to their step-parents as they do not carry their step-parents genetic traits, therefore are useless to them.

Men in barrooms with the influence of alcohol, things can get out of control resulting in the men fighting to be the better male. Ancestors would fight to

the death to prove they are the stronger male. People kill other people in every culture in the world.

In evolutionary psychology, the belief is humans are just like animals, we have evolved to be as we are. As humans murder for wealth/possessions, sex, and status/respect in the community, animals do too.

Adult chimps fight to the death to claim their reproductive partner, show they are the stronger male and the better choice for the female as they will be able to provide for her and protect her and their off-spring from harm; lions kill to be known as the king of the jungle, they take over a pride and kill the young so that there wont be competition when that lion has off-spring of his own.

This essay will explore from an evolutionary perspective, what the ultimate explanation for murder is, and if these explanations make sense of the proximate triggers for murder. Biology and cognitive psychology are the two sciences combined together to explain evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology is the science that explains why humans act the way they do. It is the explaining the problems that our ancestors faced in their ancient environments, and the problem-solving methods they created to solve their difficulties.

From these reformed problem-solving modifications, the science then attempts to establish the common roots of our ancestor's behaviors, and how those common behavioral roots are evidenced today in all the different cultures of the world.

The purpose of evolutionary psychology is to understand human behavior that is worldwide aimed at the passing of individual's genes into the next generation. Evolutionary psychology can be explained from the actions of animals in their environment as humans have evolved from animals.

Evolutionary psychology is not only about humans evolving from animals but also the need for humans to reproduce and how humans go about sexual selection, so they can reproduce with that person. If evolutionary psychology is built from biology psychology does this mean biologically we are murderers? This is a very controversy subject, many say 100% no, but we are all animals evolved to be as we are. But biology does not explain why some people murder while other people do not. If murder was in our blood would we not all be murderers.

The question at hand here is if there is an explanation for murder from an evolutionary perspective. Many researchers believe murder is passed along from our ancestors through our genetic traits. Most people like to think that murderers are either hardened criminals or pathological recluse people, research and study by David Buss shows that the majority of murderers are committed by normal people like me and you, until the day they kill. Dr. David Buss thinks that 'Murder is in our blood'.

Dr.

Buss's theory specifies that homicide is not a rare pathology or not because of somebody's culture, poor parenting, social forces or poverty. He believes murder is an evolutionary adaption that everyone has. What Dr. Buss is saying is that we all have intended to kill under the right circumstances

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because over the ages of human life, murder was beneficial in the powerful reproductive competition as our minds have developed adaptations to kill. Dr.

David Buss proposes that humans possess adaptations that evolved to produce homicide (Buss ; Duntley, 2004).

Evolutionary psychology is a very interesting topic when it comes to women been murdered by their husbands or partners. Research by Daly and Wilson in 1988, shows that, the most common cause for a man to beat or murder his wife is his sexual jealousy. Men think feel and act as if their wife is their exclusive sexual property. A husband thinks if his wife has sexual intercourse with any other male, she is violating his property. If the husband beats or murders his wife, to him it is a way of the wife repaying him for the violation.

Men want to control their spouses ' Men.... strive to control woman.

..... woman struggle to resist coercion and maintain their choices, homicide by spouses of either sex may be considered slips in this dangerous game' (Daly and Wilson, 1988).

An alternative evolutionary theory by Buss and Duntley in 1998 suggests men have evolved specific homicide elements which includes spousal homicide. Our ancestors may have been adaptive to this as if a wife was unfaithful to her husband, he may be raising off-spring for so many years that may not be his.

Not only has he no off-spring with his reproductive values, he has also lost status in his community for been fooled by the weaker sex. Research has

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shown that younger wives have a tendency to be killed more often than older wives, from an evolutionary perspective it does not make sense to kill younger wives as they are higher in fertility and reproductive value than older woman. Daly and Wilson, in 1988 came up with the following explanation ' we purpose that.

... men are more jealous of the youngest women (because of their higher reproductive values) and therefore most inclined to behave coercively towards such wives'.

Daly and Wilson go on to explain ' the high homicide risk incurred by young wives is indicative not of their low worth from male perspective, but of precisely the opposite'.

Buss and Duntley argue in 1998 that, younger woman are killed more often as they cause greater damage to the husband by having an affair. If an older woman had an affair there is least change of her reproducing to a rival male but if the younger woman has an affair she will most likely reproduced to a rival male as she is young and fertile to do so.

A husband killing his spouses is the quickest way of making sure his spouses does not reproduced with a rival male. Both of these evolutionary theories can be challenged by a third explanation. Younger women marry younger men.

This means, that younger woman are at risk as the majority of acts of aggression including homicide are committed by young males aged between, sixteen and twenty-four. Young wives deaths may have nothing to

do with their own age but that of their young husbands. Evolutionary
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psychology can also be used to explain why parents and step-parents kill their children/stepchildren.

The Cinderella effect is when step-parents abuse or murder their step-children. Daly and Wilson did a research study in 1998, 'research concerning animal social behavior provide a rationale for expecting parents to be discriminative in their care and affection, and more specifically, to discriminate in favor of their own young'.

This theory follows the evolutionary path, why would human want to invest time, effort, love, money and commitment into a child that does not carry any genetic traits of theirs.

Step parent's abuse or murder their step children as they are of no use to the future of that step parent's genetic fields. A study in Canada relieved that all homicides known to the police, within the years of 1974-1990 indicated that children under five years of age were beaten to death by their biological genetic fathers at a rate of 2.6 deaths per million child-years at risk; when the rate for stepparents was looked at it was over 120 times greater at 321.6 deaths per million child-years at risk (Daly and Wilson, 2001). Animal behavior also shows this.

When new adult lions take over a pride, they kill the young; this is to eliminate the chance of any rivalry against offspring he later fathers. Humans killing their off-spring relates to animals killing their young. For example, parents kill there young in the animal and in the human world for many different reason; to increase room in there nesting spot, to have more food to go around, to have a better sex ratio of the litter and in some cases

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to avoid caring for unrelated off spring. Parents have killed their children from age's birth to twelve months.

In the human world, this happens in China and India as the parents may not be wealthy enough to have a girl in the family, as they would have to pay a male to marry her in their culture.

' More than 16 million baby girls a year in India are killed by their mothers or by village midwives called dayans' (Steven Pinker, 1997). Teenagers also kill their baby; these teenagers are scared, young girls, afraid to tell their parents and friends. They hide their babies and sometime kill the babies so there's no proof of them ever having a child.

Unlike animals humans have rules, not that these rules are always abided by. Gang members contribute enormously to the world's homicide rates.

These gangs are made up of young males, these males usually ages between, 15-29 (Mesquida and Wiener, 199). Evolutionary psychology explains that a male joins these gangs to have a higher status in the community. They join these groups so they can be in control. In these gangs, they get status or respect by killing people from a rival gang. The higher they are in their gang the more sex they will get (Alvarez ; Bachman 2002; Vigil 2003).

This is the evolutionary side of the gang. Males kill to be respected just like lions. They also get more sexual partners, giving them a better chance to reproduce their genetics. A male's reputation is very important to them; they would fight to save it. Young males would fight quicker in public; so they can be seen standing up to their reputation, rather than behind close doors were <https://assignbuster.com/from-an-evolutionary-perspective-what-are-the-ultimate-explanations-for-murder/>

they may first try to sort the issue out so there would be no call for fighting. When a gang member has a child and is married or settled down he does not kill as much as poor, unmarried men.

Gangs are formed so that the members can have a higher status in the community, receive more sex and so that they can reproduce the dominant male role model they believe they are. William Henry Brooks was the first to arrange fights among young men in the 1870s, these fighters would be using knives, razors and rocks to injure their rival. In the animal kingdom there are no rules. Humans do have rules however these rules do not always be followed. Male ducks outnumber the female population; this means there are not enough females to reproduce the male's genes.

This results in male ducks chasing the female duck and raping the female duck. Male ducks do not get as much sex as most animals; they even have sex with dead male ducks. This would be completely unacceptable in the human world. From an evolutionary point of view males would not have sex with other males as there are no reproduction of genes here. Evolutionary theory has explanations for why murder occurs, the circumstance in which it occurs, and the psychological mechanisms dedicated to murder. Evolutionary psychology is the study of human behavior, how humans have evolved from animals.

As humans murder for wealth or possessions, sex, and status or respect in the community, animals do too. Adult chimps fight to the death to claim their reproductive partner, show they are the stronger male and the better choice for the female as they will be able to provide for her and protect her and

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they take over a pride and kill the young so that there won't be competition when that lion has off-spring of his own.

In evolutionary psychology the ultimate explanations for murder always relate back to our ancestors. Evolutionary psychology makes sense of the proximate triggers for murder as our ancestors would have done the same and as mentioned before the animal kingdom and human behavior relates when put in the same category. Evolutionary theory shows that the most common cause for a man to beat or murder his wife is his sexual jealousy. A husband feels and acts as if his wife was his sexual property – this is the husband's proximate trigger for murder.

The Cinderella effect follows the evolutionary theory as, why would humans want to invest time, effort, love, money and commitment into a child that does not carry any genetic traits of the step parent. Human behaviour relates too animals behaviour in this case as lions kill the cubs of the pride they take over.

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