

Nandita Sriram  
PWR 1-35  
Allison Carruth  
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“Locked in a Violent Embrace” Annotated Bibliography

Fernandez, Marilyn. “Domestic Violence by Extended Family Members in India: Interplay of Gender and Generation.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 12 (1997): 433-456.

**Argument:** Marilyn Fernandez addresses the issue of domestic violence in India. She frames the article as a series of fifteen different case studies of domestic violence from Bombay, India. Fernandez claims that family members, specifically female relatives and mothers-in-law, are largely responsible for a husband’s violence against his wife.

**Methodology:** The author cites many other sources throughout the article for statistics and examples. She begins her argument with theories behind domestic violence, including sociocultural and feminist perspectives. Next, she discusses the hierarchies in an Indian family, the woman’s position, and the shift from caste system to social classes. Then, she targets the family life itself—mother-in-law, sister-in-law, dowry, the husbands, the victims’ responses, and an analysis of what to redo in terms of violence intervention programs.

**Evaluation:** This article is credible because it is found in an established scholarly journal: the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Fernandez’s methodology is persuasive because she starts off with a broad perspective (various theories), then gives some cultural background, and then states her claim. One of the article’s strengths is the holistic viewpoint from which the author approaches the issue. The fifteen women chosen are of different religions, social classes, and castes. They speak different languages and are from different regions of the country. However, one of its limitations is that this source is only about the women who have come looking for help at the Women’s Centre; many women cannot do even this much because of even more dire situations. Also, this study is limited to Bombay.

For a fully developed portrayal of an Indian battered woman's experience, a larger pool of women would have to be surveyed.

**Value:** ---

"Have You Stopped Beating Your Wife?" *Economist* 375 (Apr. 2005): 50. Print.

**Argument:** This article focuses on the decline of domestic violence, specifically in Great Britain but around the world as well. It argues that women have become more economically independent, so their chances of being beaten by an intimate partner is much reduced.

**Methodology:** As this article is from the *Economist*, a generally popular and widely read magazine, the article, too, is pretty general and very short. It draws upon statistics from the 1990s and trends in the past for domestic violence in the form of surveys and charts to show the extent of the decline.

**Evaluation:** This article may be credible because it is published in the *Economist*; however, it has very little scope and specialization. It is more an introductory summary of the issue of domestic violence for an audience that may or may not be interested in the issue. It does not make a strong call to action but presents the facts based on the exact statistics and surveys it uses.

**Value:** For me this was just a good introduction to a positive aspect of my topic. None of my other sources thus far have talked about the betterment of the problem. This gives me a chance to maybe look further into the reasons domestic violence has declined (like in Britain, for reasons of a woman's independence), and this will help me formulate a solution.

Kahol, Yudhishtar. *Violence against Women*. New Delhi: Reference Press, 2003. Print.

**Argument:** In this book, Kahol shatters some common myths regarding battered women in India. For example, he negates the idea that only lower-class women in India are beaten and that battered women want to be beaten. Instead, he maintains that female

battering occurs across all status borders and that the “theory of learned helplessness” in part explains why battered women remain in abusive relationships. The details of the argument are further fleshed out in my contextual analysis paper.

**Methodology:** Kahol systematically lists out, one by one, the different myths regarding the battered woman and then refutes each of them. This is extremely clear and persuasive because when an argument is phrased in this way, its appeal is primarily logos. After listing the myths, Kahol further explains his refutation and brings in the emotional appeal through case studies later on in the book.

**Evaluation:** Kahol is a lawyer and leading crusader for women’s liberation in India and has authored many books on domestic violence. This source is credible because of its overwhelming amount of legal statistics, including crimes under the Indian Penal Code, All India Crime Rate Statistics, and different acts that have been recently instated. Also, the book covers in detail so many different crimes against women, not just marital violence. The main weakness that I discovered, however, was that in Kahol’s selected case studies, he does not elaborate upon the battered woman’s identity; he merely states her name. It would be a lot more believable if he stated where she is from, what year the battery took place, etc. Nevertheless, the facts and figures leave a strong impression upon the reader because of the sheer number Kahol cites.

**Value:** ---

Krishnan, Suneeta. “Gender, Caste, and Economic Inequalities and Marital Violence in South India.” *Health Care for Women International* 26 (2005): 87-99. Print.

**Argument:** The main issue in this article is domestic violence in South India. Krishnan argues a definite link between gender, caste, and economic inequalities to marital violence in South India. She also insists that women’s economic autonomy and husbands’ alcohol consumption are significantly associated with violence, regardless of the aforementioned inequalities.

**Methodology:** Krishnan begins by giving a background on the issue quantitatively—a number of statistics on women who have been hit

by their husbands, forced to have sex, etc. This background covers all of India, not just South India. She then focuses on South India. The study surveyed women residing in the state of Karnataka between the ages of fifteen and fifty. Results showed women of lower social status and class as more likely to be victims of abuse than women of higher socioeconomic class.

**Evaluation:** The source's credibility is high, as the institution that conducted the survey is UCSF (the University of California, San Francisco), one of the top universities in the country. Also, Krishnan's bibliographical references are thorough (and very helpful to me as well). This source is meticulous because of the large number of people it surveyed and its pinpointing of several factors that lead to marital violence. One failing that the source acknowledges, however, is that further ethnographical study is needed to correctly interpret the data collected. In other words, one would need an understanding of why women have so much or so little control over income, household duties, etc., in order to understand their vulnerability and responses to violence.

**Value:** My current question deals with why domestic violence is so prevalent in India. (For the purposes of this contextual analysis paper, though, I explore why it is so prevalent in India as well as the United States.) Krishnan's paper does not directly answer that question, but it gives good background and context about the debate surrounding my question. It addresses the different factors that go into the propagation of domestic violence in India, namely gender, caste, and economic inequalities. I might use this source to find statistics and facts about the disparities in domestic violence due to age, status, etc. It serves as a starting point for the "why" part of my question. Also, it propels me to further research the ethnographic aspect of social and family structures in India.

Loue, Sana. *Intimate Partner Violence*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2001. Print.

**Argument:** This source rejects the stereotypical portrait of abusive men as crude, neurotic misogynists and argues that battering behavior arises from high levels of insecurity. For example, men who

beat their wives are reported to be very dependent on their spouses or girlfriends as well as jealous and possessive.

**Methodology:** The evidence used in this source is the results of previous research. The authors intersperse their claims with evidence in the form of paragraphs from other books and/or dissertations. The chosen excerpts are also very dramatic and therefore compelling.

**Evaluation:** Loue's argument is well thought out, but it is not innovative. That insecurity is at the heart of power-struggle problems has been shown many times before. Still, the authors make the claim very easy to understand by spelling it out and providing persuasive excerpts of their own research. The source's level of specialization is minimal. As it is a book on domestic violence as a whole, it does not do in-depth analyses of any one specific argument. It is still a credible source, though, because it has several citations for whatever analysis it does present. The weakness in it would probably just be that a lot more details could be fleshed out, and a person would have to refer to another source to find those details.

**Value:** ---

Walker, Lenore E. A. *The Battered Woman Syndrome*. New York: Springer Publishing, 2000. Print.

**Argument:** The tenth chapter of this source explores the theories behind why domestic violence persists in America. The research was done at the Battered Women Research Center at Colorado Women's College in Denver, Colorado, and the researchers surveyed more than four hundred battered women in the Rocky Mountain region. It presents a theory called the Walker Cycle Theory of Violence, which seeks to explain why women struggle to escape violent relationships. There are basically three phases in a battering cycle. The first is the building up of tension. Second is the actual battering. Third is "loving contrition," where the batterer lovingly apologizes.

**Methodology:** In their interviews with battered women, the researchers asked for accounts of four battering incidents, recorded any evidence of tension building or "loving contrition," and graphed the pattern that supports this cycle. (Results showed that in 65 percent of all cases, there was evidence of tension building, which

would be phase one and which would occur before the battering. Fifty-eight percent of all cases supported phase three: loving contrition.)

**Evaluation:** This source is very thorough because of the methodical way it approached the subject. It covered more than four hundred women and systematically broke the responses down into the three phases. I feel like the three phases could have been better explained through the use of more specific words and perhaps a case study. Although the concepts are easy to understand, they would be more believable in the context of a real battery incident.

**Value:** This source relates to my project because it attempts to explain the psychology of a batterer or abusive male. This source does not focus on the victims or how to help the victims but rather on the perpetrators of the crime themselves. Since I am looking for better methods of eliminating the crime, this offers another route. Instead of treating the victim, one solution could treat the root cause of the problem.

EXTRA SOURCE (and why it was left out)

Counts, Dorothy A., et al. *To Have and to Hit*. Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1999. Print.

**Argument:** This book discusses the problem of domestic violence from many points of view and many different parts of the world, including Fiji, India, and China. Writers Karen Keljo Tracy and Charles B. Crawford argue wife abuse within and across cultures from an evolutionary perspective and claim that male violence toward women has biological roots in many primates.

**Methodology:** The writers first give a background on Darwin's evolutionary theory and review certain terminology. The first area they analyze is sexual dimorphism between males and females and Darwin's theory of sexual selection. Next, they claim that wife abuse may have also been useful in mate guarding and controlling the reproductive behavior of spouses. The third area is the concept of social reciprocity; to trade altruistic acts is key for primates, and failure to do so engenders fierce attacks. The writers give many examples of different primates to explain this theory.

**Evaluation:** This source is quite thorough and credible because of the painstaking details it goes into about evolution and because it explains the subject well. It is somewhat tough to read, and therefore, it could easily be overlooked or ignored. I think greater emphasis needs to be placed upon the relationship between behavioral traits in chimpanzees and violence in humans. Most of my other sources disregard this theory in general, so it makes it stand out all the more.

**Value:** In the first draft of my paper, I used this source because I wanted to visualize my research question from all standpoints. However, having decided upon India as my focus, I now realize the necessity of narrowing down my research. There is only so much that can be covered in fifteen pages. Though the evolutionary theory is very interesting, I feel like it holds no more weight than the many feminist theories I've come upon; I do not want to select one over the other just because I find this one particularly interesting. While revising my draft, I have learned to distinguish between my own interests and what directly relates to my research question.