

CHAPTER 11: AGGRESSION

1. WHAT IS AGGRESSION?

A. **Aggression:** behavior intended to harm someone (even if they don't actually harm)

i. Physical acts, verbal acts, inaction

B. Aggression is a prevalent social problem

i. Severity of examples range from major to minor

ii. Teasing, bullying, spanking, assault, hate crimes, rape, murder, mass shootings, terrorism, war, genocide

C. Types of aggression

i. Instrumental (proactive)

1. *A means to an end*

2. *Proactive, designed to achieve a desired goal*

ii. Emotional (reactive)

1. *An end to itself*

2. *Reactive, often impulsive, done for its own sake*

iii. Direct (overt)

1. *Focused at the target to cause direct injury*

2. *Typically physical but can be verbal (hitting, yelling, insults)*

iv. Indirect (relational)

1. *Focused away from the target to subvert relationships or social status*

2. *Typically verbal (gossiping, lying, ostracism)*

D. Gender Differences

i. It is a universal finding that men are more violent than women

1. *Differences are stable over time and culture*

ii. But, there are challenges to the notion that men are more aggressive than females

1. *Boys tend to be more overtly aggressive*

2. *Girls often are just as indirectly or relationally aggressive as boys*

2. EXPLORING AGGRESSION → EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

A. Situational Cues

- i. The Weapons Effect (Berkowitz and Le Page 1967)
 1. *The mere presence of weapons can increase the likelihood of aggressive behavior*
 - a. *"The fingers pulls the trigger, but the trigger may also be pulling the finger."*
 2. *Demonstrated in late setting*
 - a. *Presence of guns → higher aggression (electric shocks)*
 - b. *External validity?*
- ii. The Rifle Study (Turner, Layton, and Simons 1975)
 1. *Salt Lake City, Utah (STUDY 1)*
 - a. *Survey of 93 male and female drivers*
 - b. *Irritation at others' driving behaviors*
 - c. *Hostile reactions included facial expressions, verbalizations, hand gestures, tailgating, high-beam flashing, horn-honking*
 2. *Study 2: Observation Study*
 - a. *IV1: Aggressive Cues and Context*
 - i. *Rifle gun rack and bumper sticker*
 - ii. *No rifle in gun rack, rifle and "friend" bumper sticker, or rifle and "vengeance"*
 - b. *IV2: Victim Visibility*
 - i. *Curtain closed or curtain opened*
 - c. *DV: Horn-honking*
 3. *Results*
 - a. *Aggressive cues increase aggressive behavior significantly only when participants were not visible (deindividuated)*

3. ORIGINAS OF AGGRESSION

- A. Is aggression innate?
 - i. Instinct theories
 1. *Freud: We have a death instinct*
 - a. *Unconscious desire to escape the tensions of day-to-day living through death*
 - b. *Aggression is instinctual*
 2. *Lorenz: aggression is an innate, instinctual motivation*
 - a. *Tool for survival*
 - b. *Aggression is reflex/reaction*
 - ii. Evolutionary Theory

1. *In evolutionary psychology, an emphasis is placed on genetic survival rather than survival of the individual*
 - a. *Accounts of inhibition of aggression against genetically related others*
 - b. *Siblings, children, parents, etc.*
 2. *Gender differences*
 - a. *Males aggress to achieve and maintain high status*
 - i. *Competition for sexual reproduction*
 - b. *Females aggress to protect offspring*
 - iii. *Genetic and biochemical influences*
 1. *Behavioral Genetics*
 - a. *Is an aggressive personality type due to genes?*
 - b. *Mixed findings, but generally supportive evidence on heritability of aggression*
 - i. *Twin Studies*
 1. *Monozygotic versus dizygotic children*
 - ii. *Adoption Studies*
 1. *Biological versus adoptive parents*
 2. *Try to understand the role of the situation in which you are raised*
 2. *The role of testosterone*
 - a. *Are there specific biological factors that influence aggression?*
 - b. *Strong positive correlation between testosterone levels and aggression*
 - i. *Ex: longer ring-to-index finger ratios are correlated with higher levels of aggression*
 - c. *Correlation is not causation!*
- B. *Is aggression learned?*
- i. *Operant conditioning*
 1. *Reinforcement*
 - a. *Positive reinforcement: aggression produced desired outcomes*
 - b. *Negative reinforcement: aggression prevents or stops undesirable outcomes*
 - i. *Ex: kids who stands up to bully prevents negative outcome, which can reinforce behavior of standing up to bully*
 2. *Punishment*
 - a. *Punishment is most likely to decrease aggression when it...*
 - i. *Immediately follows the aggressive behavior*
 - ii. *Is strong enough to deter the aggressor*