Aggression

Aggression is multi-faceted. However, when explaining aggression, we tend to focus on the individual (the correspondence bias or the Fundamental Attributional Error).

In addition, to understand aggression, we may need to understand concepts such as competition for scarce resources, cognitive dissonance (when we aggress and believe we are a good person), and stereotypes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Factors</th>
<th>Biological Factors</th>
<th>Psychological Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Situational Determinants of Aggression  
  - Frustration-aggression hypothesis  
  - Temperature  
  - Culture and Aggression |  
  - High levels of norepinephrine and low levels of serotonin  
  - Damage to the hypothalamus |  
  - Schacter Two factor theory  
  - Reinforcement for aggressive behavior  
  - Observational learning of aggressive behavior  
  - Ego Defense mechanisms (displacement and projection)  
  - Self-serving bias |
| Other factors not discussed in your textbook  
  - Poverty  
  - Evolution and Aggression  
  - Gender and Aggression |
Frustration-aggression hypothesis

Your authors define aggression as behavior whose purpose is to harm another.

The frustration-aggression hypothesis states that animals aggress only when their goals are thwarted.

Examples

- The chimp wants the banana (goal), but the pelican is about to take it (frustration), so the chimp threatens the pelican with his fist (aggression).
- The robber wants money (goal), but the bank teller has it all locked up (frustration), so the robber threatens the teller with a gun (aggression).
- Dr. Cox wants to look good in front of his wife (goal), but cannot (frustration), and takes it out on Carla (aggression).
**Situational Determinants of Aggression: Heat**

There are higher rates of violent crimes, but not non-violent crimes, as the number of days above 90 degrees Fahrenheit increase. (there were 260 cities assessed as a sample)

This relationship still held when you took into account unemployment rates, per capita income and average age of the residents.

As the temperature rises above 80° F, the odds of a pitcher hitting a batter with a pitch increases.
Situational Determinants of Aggression: Heat

It is believed that temperature increases feelings of anger, or there is misattribution of the arousal that occurs with increased temperature (see the Schacter Two-Factor Theory of Emotions).

(image source: Huffman and Carpenter, Visualizing Psychology, 2nd edition)
Situational Determinants of Aggression: Heat

This may help account for why the presence of parks reduces violence during the summer. It gives a different attribution for the increased arousal.

In other cases it may help reduce arousal and stress, making aggression less likely.
How Understanding the Psychology of Helping Behavior Started

On March 13, 1964, Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death in front of her home in front of 37 witnesses watching from their windows.

After the attacker stabbed her, one man yelled at him and he began to flee.

When the assailant realized no one came out to help her, he returned and stabbed her again. When she cried for help, the lights in neighboring apartments came on and he fled again.

He returned for a 3rd time 15 minutes later and stabbed her to death. It was 30 minutes after the first attack before anyone called the police (who arrived 2 minutes later).

Why did no one help her? It is easy to attribute this behavior to our culture’s alienation, apathy, indifference and unconscious sadistic impulses—these are all dispositional explanations that underestimates that social forces at work (the fundamental attributional error, again), which allows us to believe that we are “not the type of people who would fail to help”.

Often ignored are the social factors (situational factors) that reduced the likelihood that people will help:

- diffusion of responsibility
- pluralistic ignorance
- informational social influence (social proof)
Diffusion of Responsibility

Diffusion of responsibility is the phenomena in which the presence of other people makes it less likely that any individual will help someone in distress because the obligation to intervene is shared among all the onlookers.

Help!

In my first aid class, when requesting aid, or asking someone to dial 911, look at someone, or point to someone and say:

- “You, call 911”
- “You, get help”

DO NOT SAY

- “CALL 911”
- “SOMEONE GET HELP”

Based on what we know about pluralistic ignorance, everyone will think you are talking to someone else.
Diffusion of responsibility can help explain the following:

- In general, you are more likely to receive help on a country back road compared to a busy freeway.
- When I was living with two roommates, there was a lot of stuff in the fridge that no one knew who owned (and consequently it has been there for years).

A clerk who needs help checking out customers at the register--based on the idea of Diffusion of Responsibility

- What is a good way to request help?
- What is a bad way to request help?
Pluralistic Ignorance

People’s lack of awareness of how other people in “the group” are thinking, feeling, or responding. This lack of awareness can lead to behavior that conforms to the status quo.

“All those in favor say ‘Aye.’ ”

“Aye” “Aye” “Aye”

“Aye” “Aye”

Drawing by H. Martin; © 1979 The New Yorker Magazine.
Student examples of pluralistic ignorance

Pluralistic ignorance: People’s lack of awareness of how other people in “the group” are thinking, feeling, or responding. This lack of awareness can lead to conformity.

At a party a few weeks ago, John told this joke but I didn’t get it. I wanted to ask about it, but I figured that I would look stupid because I thought everyone else understood it except me. Later, I found out that no one had understood it and we had all thought that everyone understood so none of us asked about it.

Last night my dad flew in for graduation on Saturday. I met him at his hotel in Eugene. I was very hungry when I went over but he didn't mention anything about food. I assumed that he must have eaten on the plane and I would wait until later and eat at my house. After about a half an hour of visiting my stepmother said, "I'm starving, where's a good place to eat?" My dad joined in and said that he was also hungry.
Sandy, Joe, Donna, and Steve were out drinking at some local bars. Eventually they decided it was time to head home. Joe had driven them all to the bar and he was pretty blasted. Sandy wasn't sure if he should be driving, but no one else seemed worried about it so she got in the car. However, Donna and Steve were thinking the same thing that Sandy was but they didn't say anything either because they both thought that no one else was worried about it.
Social Proof (informational social influence)

Deciding what the appropriate and acceptable behavior is by imitating the behavior of other people (this is not the definition in your textbook).

Student and personal examples of social proof (informational social influence)

As an instructor, I am involved in many fire drills. After spending about ten minutes outside people wonder if it is all right to go back in. Usually someone comes out and gives the okay signal. During the time it is unclear whether or not you should go in, people look for is if other people are going back in. The inference is that if others are going in, it must be all right to go in.

Sometimes we do not know what the speed limit is. This is particularly true if we are unfamiliar with the area. If we do not know what it is, often we around and see what other people are doing. By observing the behavior of others, we infer what the speed limit is.

Darek was in a bar that had a no-smoking sign posted on the wall. He likes to smoke but wasn’t sure if he should violate the prohibition in the bar. When he looked around, he noticed quite a few people smoking near the pool tables so he figured it must be OK to light up, at least in that area of the bar.
At the apartment complex I was living at, there is a recycling bin for glass. I wasn’t sure whether or not I was supposed to remove the labels or not. To answer this question, I looked in the bin to see what other people did. The glass jars had labels on it, so it must be all right to leave the labels on. A few weeks later, there was a note on the door of the tenants indicating the rules for recycling…one of them was removing labels from glass jars.

If the rebels troops are suppose to evacuate as the Empire closes in on them, one clue is to see what others are doing.
Manufacturing Informational Social Influence

Groups, organizations, corporations, political parties and individuals can “manufacture” and exaggerate the predominance of a particular belief, thus affecting public opinion and policy. The form of persuasion is by inference and manipulation of the social environment, not a thoughtful dialogue.

Examples:

- **Microsoft**: They tried to put pressure on state attorney generals, by “manufacturing” letters of protest of their lawsuits against Microsoft.
- **Polls and television and radio “call-in polls”**
- **Politics**: Presidential appearances are by invitation only. What you see on television are his supporters, not critics.
- **Bartenders**: They never empty a tip jar completely. They leave money in their tip jar to implicitly tell their customers that they are to leave money in the jar for them.
- **My plan for the Salvation Army at Christmas**: Have confederates with rolls of pennies always drop off pennies in the containers.

Some bartenders leave a jar on the bar for tips. To let customers know that the correct behavior is to leave money in the jar, they stimulate tips by leaving money in the jar to give the impression that previous customers folded money and left it in the jar is proper barroom behavior.
Review of some psychological factors that help us understand the Kitty Genovese murder

• **Diffusion of responsibility:**
  The phenomena in which the presence of other people makes it less likely that any individual will help someone in distress because the obligation to intervene is shared among all the onlookers.

• **Pluralistic ignorance:**
  People’s lack of awareness of how other people in “the group” are thinking, feeling, or responding.

• **Social proof (informational social influence):**
  Deciding what the appropriate and acceptable behavior is by imitating the behavior of other people (this is not the definition in your textbook).

How do these concepts help you understand the behavior of the 37 witnesses to the Kitty Genovese murder?

• They say that knowledge is power. How does this knowledge empower you?
• How does this help you understand other events in your life, the your job, or around the world?
When do attitudes predict behavior?

Like traits, attitudes have a hard time predicting behavior. There are some conditions in which attitudes are likely to influence or determine behavior. You are more likely to behave in accordance with your attitudes when (page 483):

- Attitudes are extremely or are frequently expressed,
- Attitudes have been formed through direct experience,
- You are very knowledgeable about the subject,
- You have a vested interest in the subject. If you personally stand to gain or lose something on a specific issue, you’re more likely to act in accordance with your attitudes, and
- You anticipate a favorable outcome or response from others for doing so.
Do attitudes predict helping behavior or are there situational factors that interfere with helping?

Seminary students are asked to give a lecture on the how to get a job as a seminary student OR the Good Samaritan parable. Due to scheduling constraints, they are told to give the lecture in five minutes OR 30 minutes across campus.

As each student crosses campus, he encounters a slumped man coughing, groaning and head down. Does he offer help?
Which condition(s) had the highest rate of helping behavior?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of lecture</th>
<th>Time to give lecture</th>
<th>5 minutes</th>
<th>30 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to get a job</td>
<td>(a) You have 5 minutes to give the lecture on how to get a job</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Clock" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Clock" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Samaritan parable</td>
<td>(b) You have 30 minutes to give the lecture on how to get a job</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Clock" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Clock" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) You have 5 minutes to give the lecture on the Good Samaritan parable</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Clock" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Clock" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) You have 30 minutes to give the lecture on the Good Samaritan parable</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Clock" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Clock" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do attitudes predict behavior?
- Will those who are preparing a lecture on the Good Samaritan help a stranger?
Latané and Darley’s Model of Helping Behavior

In order to provide help, one must:

1. Notice the event
   - Yes
   - No

2. Interpret the situation as an emergency
   - Yes
   - No

3. Assume some responsibility for helping
   - Yes
   - No

4. Have knowledge on how to help or find help
   - Yes
   - No

5. Decide to help implementation
   - Yes
   - No

Help the victim