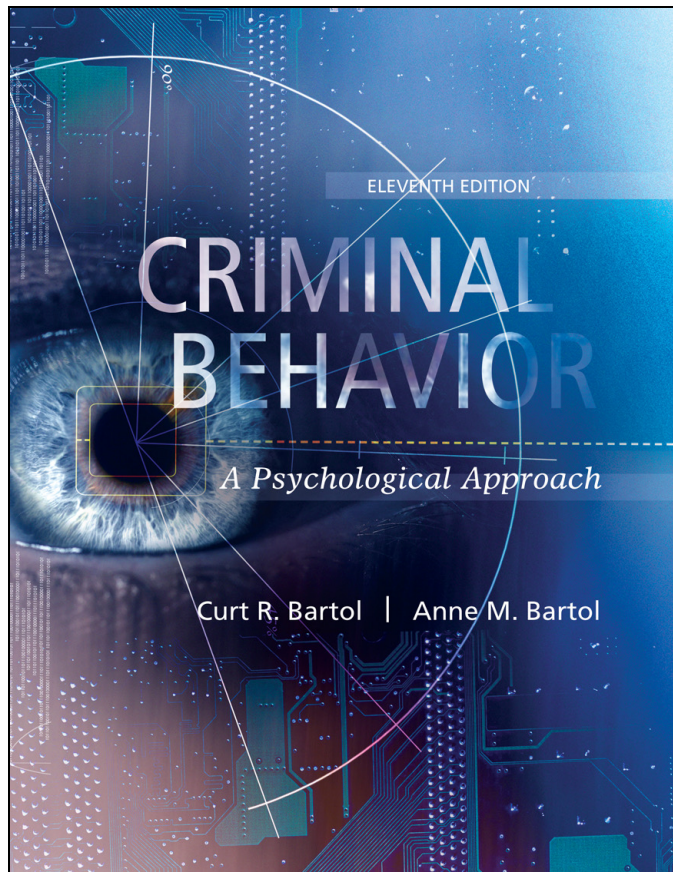


Criminal Behavior

A Psychological Approach

Eleventh Edition



CHAPTER 5

Human Aggression and Violence

Chapter Objectives

- Explore the various ways of defining and identifying aggressive behavior.
- Review the major theories on the development of aggression and violence.
- Emphasize the importance of cognitive processes in aggressive behavior.

Chapter Objectives

- Explore the interactions of biology and cognitive processes in aggressive behavior and violence.
- Outline important key concepts in understanding aggression and violence, such as weapons effect, modeling, and hostile attribution bias.

Chapter Objectives

- Introduce the General Aggression Model and I³ Theory.
- Review the effects of digital, electronic, and other media on aggression and violence.
- Examine the current research on copycat (contagion effect) crime.

Defining Aggression

- Social definition
 - The intent and attempt to harm another individual, physically or socially, or, in some cases, to destroy an object
 - Passive-aggressive behaviors
 - Still aggression
 - Not all aggressive behavior is socially negative
 - Sports
 - Some aspects of law enforcement
 - Varies by culture
 - Also by gender within a culture

Defining Aggression

- Some criminal aggressive acts do not involve violence
 - Stalking
 - Threats
- Some aggressive acts that are socially unacceptable are still not criminal acts
 - Predatory business practices
 - May intend to try to destroy competitor through legal, though often unethical, methods
 - Malicious internet posts
 - Kids bad behavior on playgrounds
 - Exclusion
 - Name calling
 - Others?????????

Defining Aggression

- Hostile aggression
 - Expressive aggression
 - Response to anger-inducing conditions
 - Fight or flight (chose fight)
 - Goal is to make victim suffer
 - Torture homicide
 - Most violent crimes
 - More often than not it is not preplanned
 - May be situational
 - Violent only when drinking

Defining Aggression

- Instrumental aggression
 - Aggression is a means to an end
 - Competition or the desire for some object (\$) or status possessed by another person
 - Typically, no intent to harm unless interference
 - Robberies
 - May be preplanned

Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression

(6:08)



Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression

- Psychodynamic
 - Hydraulic model
 - Pressure builds up in a container...Boom!
 - Humans are prone to aggression by nature.
 - Freud: If violent crime is to be controlled, the human animal must be provided with multiple, but appropriate, channels for catharsis.
 - Channels include
 - Playing high energy sports
 - Also hypothesized that watching high energy sports could be an outlet as well (vicarious outlet)

Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression

- Ethological viewpoints
 - Territory violations lead to violence
 - Based on studies of animals in the wild
 - Little empirical support
 - Too much reliance on instinct over cognition

Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression

- Frustration-aggression hypothesis
 - The person is blocked from obtaining an expected goal.
 - Frustration results, generating anger
 - But all persons who experience frustration do not get angry
 - Anger predisposes or readies the person to behave aggressively.
 - While true in some cases, too simplistic an explanation for all aggression

Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression: Frustration



Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression

- Weapons effect
 - Berkowitz and LePage Study (1967) replicated by others since
 - Does the mere presence of a weapon cause those without one to act violently?
 - Some support for this
 - Does this mean we should pull all SRO's out of public high schools?
 - Should we follow Great Britain and disarm all police officers?
 - Is there a weaponless effect?

Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression

- Cognitive-neoassociation model
 - An aversive event produces a negative affect.
 - Physical pain or psychological discomfort
 - The unpleasant feeling may evoke aggressive or violent responses.
 - Cognitions mediate and evaluate a proper course of action which may or may not include aggression.
- Really all this says is that in most circumstances, **most of us** think before we act

Theoretical Perspectives on Aggression

- Displaced aggression theory
 - Angry in a situation where you cannot respond i.e. boss yells at you at work
 - Can't take it out on the boss, go home and kick the dog for barking at the mailman (assume this is not the normal response)
 - This may be applicable in a number of domestic cases

Bandura on Social Learning Factors in Aggression and Violence

(5:04)



Social Learning Factors in Aggression and Violence

- Video Previous slide.
 - Would they do the same with a real person?
 - Or did they just learn it was ok to hit THIS doll?
- Modeling
 - Bandura's Bobo doll experiment
 - Aggressive behavior is a reflection of aggression learned from role models
 - Three types of models
 1. Family members (parents strongest factor)
 2. One's subculture (gangs etc. Stronger factor than family for adolescents)

Social Learning Factors in Aggression and Violence

- 3. Symbolic Figures in Mass Media
 - Video Games
 - Does anyone really “die” in a video game?
 - Just hit the reset button
 - Movie Heroes
 - Movies
 - Violent X rated videos on the internet

(more on this upcoming)

Social Learning Factors in Aggression and Violence

- Observation modeling (Bobo)
 - Individuals differ widely in their ability to learn from observation.
 - The motivation to rehearse what has been observed (value of role model)
 - What happens to the observed model
 - Are they rewarded or punished
 - Periodic reinforcement is essential to maintain behavior.

Cognitive Models of Aggression (2:08)



Cognitive Models of Aggression

- Hostile attribution model
 - Youth and adults prone toward violence are more likely to interpret ambiguous actions as hostile and threatening than are their less aggressive counterparts.
 - Attribution error is always external, toward others, not toward self
 - Develops during preschool years.
 - Peer rejection
 - Abuse and maltreatment
 - Attribution error common in domestic violence

Cognitive Models of Aggression

- Aggressive behavior
 - Aggressive behavior often receives immediate reinforcement for the aggressor, good or bad
 - Becomes persistent strategy
 - Diminished intellectual competence
 - Poor social skills
 - Aggression is the easiest response
 - Not much cognitive load imposed

Cognitive Models of Aggression

- The general aggression model
 - Aggression and violence depends on:
 1. How an individual perceives and interprets the social environment
 2. Expectations about the likelihood of various outcomes

Cognitive Models of Aggression

- The general aggression model
 - Aggression and violence depends on:
 3. Knowledge and beliefs about how people important to them usually respond in similar situations
 4. The cognitive and other “tools” the person has
 - Is a knee jerk violent response all they have? No other “good” social skills?

Cognitive Models of Aggression

5. Other external influencers

- Who else is present that might influence the response?
 - Deviant peers
 - Others around that expect a violent reaction.
Is the person the bully and the rest of the class is watching so reputations are at stake

Are factors present that impair cognition:
Drugs and Alcohol

Overt and Covert Acts of Aggression

- Gender differences in aggression
 - Differences due to cultural and socialization processes
 - Gender differences in aggressive behavior emerge in preschool years.
 - Girls engage in relationship and interpersonal forms of aggression.
 - Play with dolls
 - Boys engage in physical aggression.
 - Play violent video games
 - Contact sports
 - Parents and significant others in the child's life treat each gender differently with respect to acceptable aggressive behaviors

Caregiver Expectations By Gender

(3:25)



Effects of Media Violence

- The research community is sharply divided whether or not violent media and violent video games are linked with aggressive/violent behavior on the part of the user/viewer
- Video games have an interactive component, other forms of media do not.
 - This has been shown to enhance learning in general because it is interactive **but** whether or not this is related to user violence outside of the game is not well understood
- MAY have a significant effect on those persons ALREADY predisposed toward violent behavior
 - But it is only one risk factor

Effects of Media Violence

- Is it likely that persons spending inordinate amounts of time playing video games do so because they are already social outcasts?
 - If so, is it the social isolation and a lack of socially accepted peers on the part of extreme players driving the violence and not the video games
 - Does the role assumed in the game make a difference: Good guy vs bad guy?
- Or does the game become so addictive they spend all of their time alone playing the games and become social outcasts because of this?
-

Effects of Media Violence

- Watching violent movies and playing violent video games may not increase the tendency toward acting violently in persons not already predisposed toward acting that way
- Does it matter if the person always loses or always wins?
- Short-term and long-term effects may not be the same
- In general, most persons that watch violent movies and play violent video games are not any more aggressive or violent than persons not involved with either of these forms of entertainment

Effects of Media Violence (5:40)



Effects of Media Violence

- Copycat effect
 - Contagion effect
 - Tendency to model or copy an activity portrayed in the media
 - School-shooter copycats
 - Copycat terrorists

Additional Resources

- **Videos:**

- Theories of Aggression in Social Psychology. (2021) Practical Psychology
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNWW-pPmTsI>
- Stanley Milgram: Human Aggression (2012)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHSonimgv68>
- Albert Bandura's Bobo Doll experiment (2015) PsychHub
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDA5nmiGD2w>
- Attribution Bias. (2019) WildDigiCare
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2TbR3_Imnc
- Girl Toys vs Boy Toys (2017) BBC
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWu44AqF0iI>
- Are Violent Video Games Bad for You? (2017) PsyShow Psyc.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwv_wTUNwLs