AGGRESSION

Biological basis
Freud – unconscious, nature not nurture, childhood
1. Thanatos – risky, self-destructive + aggressive unconscious force
2. Eros – the opposite
A correlation between personality + aggressive behaviour but lacks supportive research

Aggressive instinct
Animal behaviour studies (ethology)
Fighting instinct due to evolution – as defence, higher group status
Show threat behaviour without causing harm as not evolutionarily beneficial Creates submissive behaviour – same in humans
Ape studies (closest to humans) eg Machiavellian intelligence – don’t have to be the biggest, just making alliance + shows grooming
Humans aren’t well designed for fighting but powerful brain intelligence don’t have to be the biggest but best at
– social intelligence may be more important than physical strength

Aggressive personality
Certain personality with different dimensions – extravert or introvert
Type A – competitive, hostile, workaholic, get own way, associated with coronary heart disease (old research) – associated with aggression eg against colleagues
Type B – laid back, relaxed, less successful
Nature not nurture
Personality is not a good predictor of aggressive behaviour

Influence of context
Maes – investigated if violent + non-violent suicide + homicide are related to atmospheric/geometric activity
- Temperature + day light cycle on mood eg sunshine makes ppl feel happier but winter/darkness makes ppl feel depressed (so increases suicide rate)
= Correlation between ambient temperature + violent suicide (peaks in spring when dark/ warm at night)

Kernick + MacFarlane – heat/aggression relationship
- Car remained stationary for 12 secs when green light
- Counted number of horn honks

Frustration – aggression theory
Dollard et al – throughout our lives many things happen that frustrate us, these go away when we achieve life goals
Goal competition + aggression are cathartic (release the anger within)
- Lynchings murder in southern USA 1930s – due to men’s poverty, couldn’t achieve life goals so took out anger on others

Crowding
- Measured crowding in medium security prison, causing stress
- Aggressive incident between 2 prisoners
= Correlation between perceived crowding + perceived level of threat/aggression

Social Learning Theory
Learning by doing. + vicarious – operant conditioning (reward)
- Frustration – aggression theory
- Young children influence by the media

Cultural influences
Cultures of honour – female infidelity damages male rep (can’t pass on genes, evolution)
Subcultures of violence – eg America (guns + gangs)
- Practical explanation = ppl who don’t have good life prospects
- Impression management – appeals to some as kids get sense of self from parents but as teen realise need to focus more on themselves, some can’t cope with this + turn to anti-social behaviour as form of handicap (can blame others as to not harm own self esteem, defence mechanism)
Machismo – young men being aggressive seen as good (eg Spain + Italy, rural societies away from police/authority) eg head of family
Cultural influences are very strong

Computer games + aggression
Van Schie + Wiegman = Netherlands school (age 10-14) to examine positive + negative effects of playing videogames
= Computer games don’t tend to make us more aggressive, we know the difference between real + fiction
= 0.09 correlation with intelligence
= 0.12 negative correlation with pro-social behaviour

Testosterone
Higher incidents of male violence
Berman + Galduze + Taylor – electric shock study
- Type A + Type B ppl competed in reaction time task (giving electric shock to increasing provocative opponent)
= Shows testosterone, linked to physical aggression
Book, Starzyk + Quinsey – meta-analysis = 0.14 correlation
Archer, Kevan + Davies – re analysed = 0.08 correlation

Cultural influences
Bonta = 25 peaceful societies examined (no violence), inter-personal or inter-group
Chewong = Malay peninsula – no words for quarrelling, fighting, aggression or warfare
Ifaluk = Micronesia – in 12 months 1 tiny aggression
Amish, Mennonites + Hutterites (USA/Canada) – Huts never a recorded murder
Kadaz (India) – no crime according to police
Jains (India) – habitual criminality unknown, economically depressed but isolated (see into military through)

Similarities between groups
- Strong emphasis on co-operation + group success – not individual competition + achievement
- Kids cherished until age 3, then placed at bottom of group + must work way up (learn + earn place in modest way)
- Fear + ambivalence – positive interpersonal relations must be constantly re-enforced

- Violence against pub + property
- Police/camera operators intentional targets – 21 police vehicles damaged + private vehicles damaged (suspected)
- The unemployed – felt isolated from society, defending territory from authority
- Violence limited to 2 roads + damage only accidental broken windows
- Crowd acts according to group norms

Reicher (1984) = 0.12 negative correlation with pro
= 0.09 correlation with intelligence
= difference between real + fiction
= 0.09 correlation with intelligence
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Le Bon = c19th (revolution)
- Crowd is mindless, violent + irrational
- Anonymity (blame group not individual)
- Suggestibility (impressionable)
- Contagion (everyone experiences it so any crowd will become violent)

Reluctant to kill...
Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall found = after WWII, 100s interviews with frontline infantrymen...
- 20% US soldiers actively aimed to kill enemy
Lt Colonel Dave Grossman found = WWII, operant conditioning in training methods (rehearsed process so much, when kill deny to himself that actually killing another human)
- Led to 55% soldiers being able to actively kill in Korean War + 95% in Vietnam war

War
- Biggest place aggression noticed
- When in that setting, ppl’s original moralities disappear so do what they must to survive (begin to enjoy themselves)
- Thanatos

Criticism
- Ppl would’ve been criticised if didn’t like war
- Bloody heroism – reassuring loved ones
- Combat may have been an escape from trench life (feel as though achieving something) not just waiting for death
- Reluctant to kill/didn’t kill prisoners – only 20% actively aimed to kill enemy in WW1 (unable to kill from front due to face to face contact but killed when running away)
- Psychiatric disorders

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