

# Deviant aggressive behaviour

- Theory I: Deviant aggressive behavior is learned from experience. Individuals in a society learn to do those things for which they receive rewards and to avoid those things for which they receive punishment.
- Theory II: Deviant aggressive behavior is a symbolic expression of hostility toward personal authority figures. When an individual is frustrated in his personal life, he becomes angry toward parents, bosses, or public officials. He will express this anger by deviant aggressive behavior.
- Theory III: Deviant aggressive behavior is the rational action of oppressed individuals. Social rules systematically discriminate among people. People who are most hurt by the rules are least likely to profit from conforming to them and thus do conform less.
- Theory IV: Deviant aggressive behavior is a social role. Individuals are socialized into the role through contact with a deviant subculture.

1) What social policy would be appropriate to reduce deviant aggressive behavior if Theory I were correct? Theory II? Theory III? Theory IV?

If **theory 1** was correct, then to reduce deviant behaviour we would have to punish deviant behaviour and reward normal behaviour. We can think of our current socio-political system to be more or less doing this now, with us being punished for deviant aggressive behaviour either through systems like the prison system. Here the reward can be thought of as an avoidance of the punishment.

If **theory 2** was correct, to reduce deviant aggressive behaviour we would have to reduce frustration and anger. Since it is difficult to remove sources of frustration in everyone's life, it would rather be prudent to allow for alternate ways to deal with frustration and anger, and for harmless and productive ways to deal with anger and frustration. A possible social policy would be to have more easily available anger management programs and by providing targeted care to those who might have anger issues.

If **theory 3** was correct, then individuals who are oppressed perform aggressive behaviour. To reduce this, social policies which help remove systematic oppression and power structures would reduce deviant behaviour. This would mean addressing issues such as racism, sexism, classism, poverty, inequality, etc.

If **theory 4** was correct, then we can address aggressive deviant behaviour by identifying deviant sub-cultures, and by dismantling or dissolving them. An example of this would be to possibly identify sub-cultures with violent tendencies, such as fascist groups or gangs.

- 2) During the past ten years, American society has been running a series of “experiments” with deviant aggressive behaviour. Take any one of these experiments (e.g. #MeToo, mass shootings, political rhetoric) and discuss what we have learned about the four theories from this series of experiments.

It would be difficult to analyse deviant behaviour with regard to any one experiment in a comprehensive manner largely because of the difficulty in collecting precise data about the event - but we will still attempt to do so keeping in mind that without any *actual* data it is too tough to draw any real conclusions. Let us try and do this with the #MeToo movement.

A start would be to identify what the deviant aggressive behaviour is; in this case it would include sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexual misconduct. By calling out offenders on social media, it served as a platform for women to attempt to bring to light how widespread sexual harassment was in the American entertainment industry, before spreading to other industries and countries.

Taking **theory 1** into account, the movement punished sexual offenders by calling them out on social media - this would sometimes, based on the context of the case, lead to being dropped by production houses, or by events. Again, here the reward seems to be the absence of a punishment. It is difficult to again see how much sexual harassment has reduced post #MeToo because of how difficult it is to get exact numbers or details of such events.

Taking **theory 2** into account is less valid in this context - most of the sexual harassment cases were perpetrated by a man in an authority position or position of control.

**Theory 3** also does not make much sense in this context, as men are not an oppressed group, and also because in this case the deviant aggressive behaviour leads to further oppression of the oppressed group (women).

**Theory 4** makes a little more sense - here the deviant sub-culture could be attempted to be thought of as misogynistic men in positions of power, though calling it a ‘culture’ might be a little bit of a stretch. So while the #MeToo movement can be thought of as the systematic addressing of the behaviour of the people in this sub-culture, it is still not an exact explanation. It can still serve to be a useful way to understand the movement, where there is largely a common demographic similarity in *who* the #MeToo movement is attacking.