

John was arrested for fighting with supporters of a rival team after a football match. He explained to the police officer why he was aggressive. The police officer noted John's comments in her notebook. **Table 5** below shows some of John's comments.

**Table 5**

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|---|
| <p>The players were fighting on the pitch<br/>Our team lost again – it's not fair<br/>Supporters of the other team ganged up on us<br/>I was with my mates – we were all punching at once<br/>Everyone else was fighting, so I just joined in</p> |
|---|

Discuss **one or more** social psychological explanations for aggression. Refer to some of the comments in **Table 5** in your answer.

**[16 marks]**

**Possible content:**

- frustration-aggression hypothesis – aggression results from goal prevention; psychodynamic theory of aggression as a physiological drive needing cathartic release; aggression as displacement; importance of environmental cues; importance of proximity to goal
- social learning theory – aggression learned as a result of observation, imitation, modelling, identification; vicarious reinforcement; mediating cognitive factors affect likelihood of behaviour being reproduced, e.g. attention
- de-individuation – membership of a co-acting group/crowd leads to reduction in feeling of personal responsibility; loss of personal identity; anonymity; assume group identity; lowering of private/public self-awareness; lowered inhibition; in-group out-group effect
- knowledge of explanations embedded in evidence.

**Possible application:**

- frustration-aggression: John's fighting might be triggered by frustration due to his team losing and/or other supporters taunting; John displaces anger at losing match/unfairness onto rival supporters
- social learning: John observes players fighting on the pitch – these are his role models – he identifies with these high status models – observes, imitates; John saw everyone else fighting and imitated

- de-individuation: John is part of a group/co-acting; therefore less likely to feel individually responsible for his aggressive act due to de-individuation; rival groups of supporters leads to in group/out-group effect.

**Possible discussion points:**

- use of evidence to support/refute explanation/s
- not all frustration leads to aggression
- factors such as personality and past experience mediate frustration-aggression effect
- mediating cognitive factors in SLT can explain why people react aggressively in some situations and not others
- de-individuation can result in pro-social as well as antisocial behaviours – depends on contextual cues and norms
- implications for explanation/s – how knowledge of causes might enable aggression to be reduced, e.g. regulating exposure to aggressive media
- comparison with other explanations, e.g. biological
- discussion linked to broader issues, e.g. determinism, role of nurture etc.

**Level 4**

Knowledge of one or more social psychological explanations for aggression is accurate with some detail. Application is effective. Discussion is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.