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The individual and personal conditions of aggressive behaviour

One of the most important aspects of aggression problem is the definition of the ways of aggression acquirement. A human being is subjected to the action of many different factors, many of which influence the formation of their personality and ways of behaviour. The conditions of aggressive behaviour sources should be sought not only in the individual differences marking 'the aggression route' that lead from the early childhood to the adulthood, but also in the factors determining variations in the course of these routes, i.e. parental lack of attention, improper upbringing, poor social adjustment of a child at school as well as the peers' rejection.

The individual and personal features are bound together with numerous aggressive predictors and violent behaviour. However, as it comes out from the recent research, an absolutely crucial predictor of that behaviour among teenagers is antisocial behaviour in their childhood (Pepler, Slaby, 1994). It indicates the function of **age** when the forms of individual aggression are analyzed.

Short-term, instrumental form of behaviour that leads to the acquiring of a certain object, as it is observed among 5-year-olds, transforms later from a physical into verbal form with the harmful intention towards other people (Surzykiewicz, 2000). The adolescent and young adulthood stages are associated with changes in the level and model of the aggressive behaviour (Loeber, Hay, 1997).. The adolescent stage is identified by Urban (2000.19) as aggressive behaviour, which is subjected to more frequent and intensive repressions by the social environment. Such visible forms of aggressive behaviour are transformed into concealed ones, which give an individual a lesser risk in order to evolve into the clear aggression (Tolan, Gorman – Smith, 1998). It exerts its influence on the learning of non-aggressive forms of reaction to provocation to aggression (Radziwiłłowicz, Radziwiłłowicz, 1997).

One should pose a question about the aggression stability here – whether the aggressive behaviour in the early childhood affects the future of an individual as well as an equally high level of aggression in the forthcoming developmental stages. There is not enough research dedicated to this phenomenon but the latest one shows that 'the early- shown

aggression and conflicts with authorities are often combined with such children's problems as the contact with criminal milieu or the tendency to escalation from minor to serious offences' (Surzykiewicz, 2000, 90).

Another factor that is considered to influence the aggressive behaviour is gender. The presentation of aggressive behaviour in the bearing of individual differences connected with the category of gender is meaningful not only for the description of the phenomenon itself but also for the intervention and preventive actions. The claim that men show a higher level of general aggression toward women is very well grounded in daily observations, crime records, not to mention the everyday gender - specific concepts. The first differences are noticed at the age of 3 and become even more distinct among 4 and 5-year-olds. The research by Loeber, Stothamer-Loeber from 1998 allow us to associate kindergarten boys with a higher level of aggression. More girls, who did not show any signs of aggression, become such later in the puberty stage. Serious violence recorded among girls peaks earlier than it does among boys. It seems to be the Wright place to Draw one's attention to the gender differences according to the type of aggressive behaviour. Contrary to boys, girls have a higher level of both verbal aggression exemplified by swearing and calling names and relation aggression such as peers' exclusion and gossiping. Some research reveals that the indirect aggression is fairly common also among men; however, it takes up the form of apparent rationality, that is one can give a rational reason for one's actions. Nevertheless, men seem to be attributed the activities connected directly with physical aggression. 'Especially aggressive actions such as inflicting pain and physical damage are committed largely by men and boys' (Surzykiewicz, 2000, 85). Moreover, both men and boys are equally more frequent victims of aggression when compared to girls and women. The attitude to aggression constitutes the main difference between the genders. The key to understanding of the individual differences in the aggressive behaviour is the role of the individual **temperament**.

Olszewski emphasizes the level of stimulation needed that results from one's temperament and indicates the aggressive behaviour as the source of this type of behaviour. 'A person, for whom the aggressive behaviour becomes a way of providing their nervous system with stimulation, directs their efforts towards elimination of this particular state and seeks an opportunity to react in an aggressive way.' The research conducted by Pufal-Struzik and Lipinski from 2002 confirms the thesis that the aggressive behaviour can assume the form of the learnt stimulation. The people with a low level of reacting, thus having a higher demand for stimulation, seek entertainment and vent of the surplus of emotions in different

ways. The low level of reacting affects setting aggressive reactions in motion in order to defend oneself against too strong stimulation.

There is a crucial course aiming at the explanation of certain features of personality versus individual differences in the domain of aggressive reaction. Such features as excitability, emotional impression, distraction - rumination, antagonistic attribution style, self-control and self-confidence expressed by the level of self-esteem are listed among the personality constructions that explain the individual differences in aggression .

A higher level of aggression was noted among the **easily excited** people that tend to react impulsively, truculently or rudely to the smallest provocation. Similarly to excitability, emotional impression is also connected with a higher readiness to aggressive behaviour, especially when combined with previous frustration (Krahe, 2005). **Distraction** and **rumination** signify one's reaction to the events that carry along antagonistic or provocative stimuli. High distraction or low rumination level indicates a fast acceptance of the provocation. Such people do not commit much time and effort for analyzing the aspects of that experience. In case of people with high rumination it is claimed that 'they are cognitively absorbed with the antagonistic experience for a long time and they are more likely to plan an extended retaliation' (Krahe, 2005, s.58). It is important to ensure a sufficient period of time between the antagonistic or provocative event and the aggressive reaction to show the rumination or distraction tendencies in action. For the easily distracted people, a longer time span causes a lesser probability of aggressive action, as opposed to the ruminative people.

The **antagonistic attribution style** is a habitual tendency to the interpretation of equivocal stimuli as antagonistic or aggressive. The existing research has shown the connection between the antagonistic attribution style by children and adults and the aggressive behaviour. According to 'the antagonistic knowledge structures' both children and adults interpret the social stimuli as more aggressive, which means that they increase the probability of the aggressive reaction occurrence. Dill and his collaborators (Krahe, 2005, 59) describe people who have the antagonistic attribution style as 'the ones wearing blood-shot glasses'. Another variable in the domain of individual differences connected with aggressive behaviour is self-control. It defines the inner brakes of an individual, which should counteract the aggressive reaction occurrence. Some of the authors declare a higher level of aggression among people with chronic insufficiency in the domain of self-control. This connection is especially visible in the case of individuals committing crimes.

Self-esteem and self-acceptance are also crucial factors correlating with the occurrence of aggression. The aggression seems to be a consequence of the existence of self-

esteem and self-acceptance. Both factors motivate the aggressive behaviour and direct its course. The way a person esteems oneself depends on such things as the way one reacts when facing a task, the quality of relationships with other people, the efficiency of their efforts, as well as the forthcoming development of their personality. The self-esteem determines the way one functions in various social roles. It also defines one's attitude to accepting or refusing of certain tasks, decision making or fearing something. The self-esteem shows itself in actions and has a multifunctional influence on one's conduct. People with a low level of self-esteem and self-acceptance admit aggression as a defence mechanism that is supposed to eliminate insecurity and increase the level of both: self-esteem and self-acceptance (Fromm, 2002; Kirwil, 1992; Kubacka – Jasięcka, 1995; Borecka – Biernat, 1997a; Godzwon, 1999).

Another aspect relating to the aggression and belonging to the propriety of an individual is **fear**. Many researchers emphasize that the aggression may be a form of defense, especially when it combines with fear (Obuchowska, 1993; Ranschburg, 1980). The determination of aggressive behaviour by fear is especially characteristic for the social fear. Aggressive activities become both defensive aggression and defending one's own representation.

Summing up the analysis of the conditions in the behaviour disturbances among children and adults that show themselves in aggressive behaviour, one should claim that not only the individual biopsychic factors but also family and school environment affect the formation of aggressive attitudes.

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