Arkadiusz Urbanek

Disturbed relations with adults as a key factor in socially harmful behaviours: on the basis of current criminals' experiences

ARKADIUSZ URBANEK

Disturbed relations with adults as a key factor in socially harmful behaviours. On the basis of current criminals' experiences

Zaburzone relacje z dorosłymi jako kluczowy czynnik społecznie szkodliwych zachowań. Na podstawie doświadczeń przestępców

Introduction

Families and their relations within are in the focus of attention for both theoretical and empirical pedagogical sciences. In fact, family research tackles all stages of its functioning as the relations between parents and their offspring are scientifically inspiring from as early as the infancy period, through adolescence, and establishing independence. Families and their interrelations are also within the scope of interest of resocialisation and diagnosis of social maladjustment, explored from various angles in this regard. The childhood period is taken into consideration upon auto-anamnestic interviews, which allow to reconstruct experiences and origins of pathogenesis. Correspondingly, families do not lose their importance with regards to diagnosis and forecast designed for the adult prisoners. Legal and organisational aspects of maintaining contact with the family of the prisoners, adjusting the system of visits and correspondence to the conditions of serving the punishment also seem to be crucial, as for instance, the significance of maintaining contact with the family is reflected in the international legislation that stresses the paramount importance of the prisoners' contact with their relatives.

Taking it all into consideration, research projects tackling childhood of nowadays criminal offenders appear still relevant especially due to the fact that preserving the time perspective, the auto-anamnestic research enable distinction between the process of pathogenesis and criminogenesis. These two phenomena refer to two separate issues, as pathogenesis commonly constitutes a primary process, whereas criminogenesis

concerns criminal career specifically[1]. Reconstruction of the child – parents relations (in some cases parents can be replaced by the caretakers) carried out during the analysis of the auto-anamnestic interviews are proportionately essential. Nonetheless, the main objective of such research is to compare experiences of two group of offenders, differing in age and at the same time – period of socialisation. It is not only about characteristic of the experiences, but predominantly comparing the experiences of family relations, gained within different social circumstances that existed in 1970s and 1990s.

Parents – children relations in a perspective of risk of maladjustment

The child's relations with adults as well as processes of socialisation are subject to analysis from the perspective of anthropology, psychology, pedagogy and criminology, searching for correlations between the quality of such relations and the style of social functioning. Macrosocial scale provides with interesting approach of socialisation concept, which – according to Robert Trives – constitutes a foundation for further social control of the behaviour. Subsequently, human's morality consolidates a superstructure that emerges over the genetically programmed, egoistic human nature[2]. The path to the establishment of the morality leads through relations with other people as it allows to set up the sense of reciprocated altruism, i.e. the tendency to act for others' sake, counting on their reciprocity. E.O. Wilson suggested that the ability to cooperate is nothing but an evolutionarily determined tendency, as evolution have eliminated these species that have been incapable to cooperate[3]. Moreover, from the socio-biological perspective, according to G. Mead, a human mind possesses a "social self", i.e. the ability to look at own self and others through the eyes of a human being[4].

Studies concerning personal reflection ability, and in consequence empathy, are in the focus of attention of research tackling human's tendency to criminal

---

[1]   L. Tyszkiewicz, *Kryminogeneza i sposoby jej badania*, "Archiwum Kryminalistyki" 2008, Vol. 29–30, pp. 218–220.

[2]   R. Trivers, *The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism*, "Quarterly Review of Biology" 1971, vol. 46.

[3]   E.O. Wilson, *Consilience. The Unity of Knowledge*, New York 1999, p. 275.

[4]   G.H. Mead, *Umysł, osobowość, społeczeństwo*, Warszawa 1975.

behaviour. Both the theory and research prove that the disability to experience higher feelings, including empathy, is an essential feature specifying those who manifest brutal or extremely egoistic conduct. With this regard, D. Goleman interestingly implied that empathy allows to overcome abusing activities as "it is the main factor curbing cruelty (…) suppressing our natural tendency of becoming compassionate towards others, allows to treat the other person as »it«", hence offenders without such trait "…are indifferent to others' suffering". Restraining our inborn tendency to compassion releases nothing but a cruelty"[5]. This issue is perceived alike by David M. Buss, who referred to the antagonistic human's tendencies originating from evolution, competing with each other: "…in the course of evolution our species became equipped with adaptations favouring the murder, nonetheless, in our minds there are also adaptations motivating to cooperate, being altruistic, solving problems peacefully, being friendly, establishing allies and scarifying for others"[6].

Anthropological discourse concerns narrower scope of pedagogical and psychological research into child's relations with adults and the social context of socialisation. Comparing to anthropological research, their range is rather microsocial, concerning individuals or groups of families. Nonetheless, academic achievements in this regard are equivalently significant. Criminal psychology and resocialisation pedagogy often focus on the environment of socialisation. For instance, the issue of unfavourable child-parents relations and lack of such bonds played significant part as a source of social maladjustment already in the concepts of Czesław Czapow and Stanisław Jedlewski. Nowadays, auto-anamnestic diagnosis of the childhood period pays great attention to the quality of child-parents relation as disadvantageous experiences become a source of further deviation. Polish and foreign research acknowledges auto-anamnestic approach in a similar context of the genesis of demoralised behaviour, reflected in the analyses of the socio-economic status and aborted family bonds[7]. Furthermore, research of Ogaga Ayemo Obaro from Nigeria tackle low material status, having many children and modeling children's behaviour by parental anti-social behaviour[8]. Empirical studies confirming

---

[5]   D. Goleman, *Inteligencja społeczna*, Poznań 2007, p. 145.

[6]   D.M. Buss, *Morderca za ścianą*, Gdańsk 2007, pp. 283–284.

[7]   T. Sakowicz, *Wybrane aspekty środowiska rodzinnego w percepcji i ocenie osób osadzonych w polskich zakładach karnych*, Kraków 2009.

[8]   O.A. Obaro, *Risk Factors in Childhood Anti-social Behavior and Adulthood Criminal Career*, "American International Journal of Social Science" 2013, vol. 2/6, p. 49–50.

strong modeling influence of parents towards their children are also of key importance[9].

Research on the issue of child-adults relations or the parenting styles have been continued, what proves its importance. Hanna Olechnowicz's works present interesting approach to the early childhood, as according to this author, early child-parents relation, i.e. multi-sensual contact and closeness, constitute a fundamental ground for establishment of interpersonal communication channels. Closeness experienced in the infancy period set up a basis for social mechanisms of behavioural control by enhancing development of skills to co-react with people and establish stable emotional system, providing opportunity to control aggression[10]. Appropriate relations with parents in the early childhood were considered by Hanna Olechnowicz as key factors of correct personal and social growth, including continuity of interpersonal contact with those a child is linked to, ability of the surrounding to introduce children to culture and aesthetic attitudes, understanding child' aggression and its appropriate canalisation (not suppression)[11].

Socialisation in socially disadvantageous conditions indeed generates tendencies to socially harmful acts. It is explicitly expressed by Jan M. Stanik, who claims that "…as a result of childhood experiences (of an offender – A.U.) individuals manifest given cognitive patterns for criminogenic lifestyle and thinking. These, in turn, refer to personality mechanisms that motivate to commit a crime, hence are not determined by situational variables"[12].

Despite differences in classification of the criminogenic acts and ways of acquiring criminal experiences, Jan M. Stanik indicated disturbances in childhood relations of the offenders with their parents. The unfavourable conditions of the childhood were present both within the group of prisoners referred to as criminogenic-aggressive and those rebellious and suspicious. The first ones were subject to corporal punishment by the parents, whereas the latter experienced extremely difficult up-bringing conditions and significant deprivation of fundamental developmental needs, with parents applying inconsequent corpo-

---

[9]   T. Sakowicz, *Dysfunkcjonalność rodziny a resocjalizacja*, Kraków 2006, s. 89.

[10]   H. Olechnowicz, *Wczesne zapobieganie agresywności i przestępczości młodocianych*, "Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Kryminologicznego im. prof. Stanisława Batawii" 1998, nr 3, pp. 9–10.

[11]   *Ibidem*, p. 10.

[12]   J.M. Stanik, *Rodzaje popełnianych przestępstw a różnice osobowościowe ich sprawców*, "Archiwum Kryminologii" 2007/8, vol. 29–30, p. 202.

ral punishment. As a result of such experiences, they would join antagonistic peer groups as teenagers, becoming familiar with criminogenic behaviour pattern in such circles[13]. Similar conclusions were drawn by Maria Jordan on the basis of her research embracing 259 boys and girls aged 16 to 17, subject to behavioural deviation. The research proved that their childhood experiences with parents were predominantly calamitous – as much as 70% of the families were at variance, with the upbringing atmosphere stigmatised by aggression, violence and quarrelling. On the other hand, as little as 17% of the researched experienced appropriate and positive relations within their families[14].

Analysing the results of Keneth H. Rubin, Kim B. Burgess, Kathleen M. Dwyer and Paula D. Hastings research among 2- and 4-year-old children, Bronisław Urban recalled that the children's tendency to aggressive behaviour does not solely result from inborn traits. The research confirmed R. Hinde's thesis from 1970s, that the tendency to externalising behaviour (such as aggression) is a consequence of an individual child's features and interactions between parents and their child[15].

The results of American research tackling the style of internal control of behaviour proved that the quality of social interactions is of paramount importance in shaping functioning style. However, the relations that are crucial origin from early childhood, as "…due to their biological and psychological importance they occur deterministic as far as gradual results of the process of interactions are concerned"[16]. Likewise, Magdalena Rode highlighted the tight link between parental as well as peer influences and the consolidation of criminogenic way of thinking. On the basis of statistical analysis, she concluded that the cognitive representation of the individuals' life reality is encoded in patterns and structures of cognition. Such representation occurs in the process of socialisation, with accompanied child's orientation towards parents and the peers[17].

---

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 202

[14] M. Jordan, *Stan opieki i kontroli wychowawczej w rodzinach młodzieży zagrożonej i niedostosowanej społecznie*, in: *Dewiacyjne aspekty współczesnego świata. **Przejawy – zapobieganie – terapia***, ed. M. Prokosz, Toruń 2004, pp. 124–125.

[15] R. Hinde, On describing relationships, *"Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry"* 1976, vol. 17.

[16] B. Urban, *Geneza i różnicowanie się zaburzeń w zachowaniu* in: *Dewiacyjne aspekty współczesnego świata. Przejawy – zapobieganie – terapia*, ed. M. Prokosz, Toruń 2004, p. 21.

[17] M. Rode, *Styl myślenia przestępczego. Podstawy teoretyczne i diagnostyczne*, Warszawa 2013, p. 191.

Child-parents relation, as well as social context of socialisation, indicate problems of pedagogical theory and practice, nonetheless, the above review of the approaches is selective as it was determined by the pedagogical nature of own research concerning childhood of nowadays criminal offenders. Even so, despite fragmentary review of the approaches, it may be concluded that the research on childhood relations remain relevant and are not only of diagnostic, but also prognostic importance. The issues of early experiences refer to the consolidated patterns of thinking, decision making and activities that may become subject to correctional influences. Notwithstanding, the analysed own research do not tackle the issue of resocialisation and projecting penitentiary influences, as its main objective is rather to indicate the areas of common childhood experiences of the nowadays recidivist criminals.

Methodological premises of the research

The source material gathered during the research consisted of direct, auto-anamnestic interviews carried out with the prisoners serving the sentence of deprivation of liberty. The field research, including collecting and selecting data from interviews were conducted between September and December 2013. The research was funded by the Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences of the University of Wrocław. The research group embraced penitentiary recidivists, i.e. offenders repeatedly penalised and located in penal institutions. Selection of such group was determined by their criminogenic lifestyle, as being subject to repeated punishment imply they have no opportunity nor will to terminate the criminogenic life path. The crime and punishment are part of their biographies, and, taking into consideration repeated sentences, their stay in penal institutions dominates in their life stories.

Notwithstanding, the subject of the interest is not only the current situation of these prisoners, but also the reconstruction of their relations with adults in the course of their socialisation in families. Hence the significance of the socialisation process that took place in given social and environmental conditions. For this purpose, 150 recidivists currently serving deprivation of liberty in prisons were in the focus of research attention. Initially characterising the events in the course of socialisation it is worth to draw attention to the symptoms of parental, harmful behaviours (Graph. 1, 2), what provides a point of departure for an in-depth reconstruction of the experience within relations with adults.
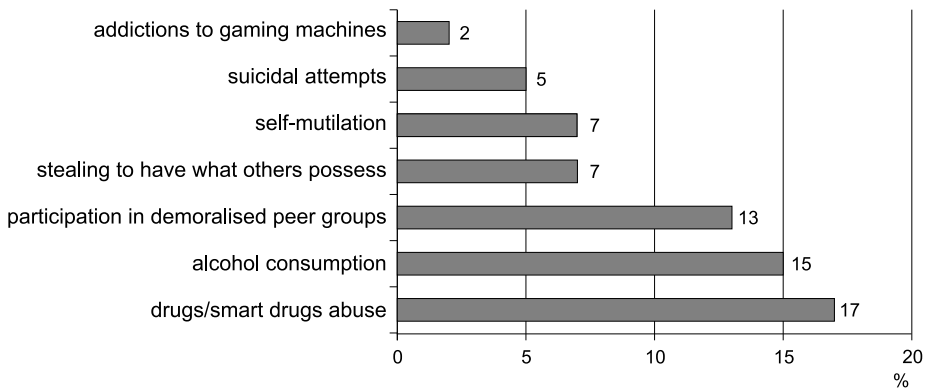
Graph 1. Catalogue of harmful behaviour occurring during socialisation period of recidivists aged 22 to 30
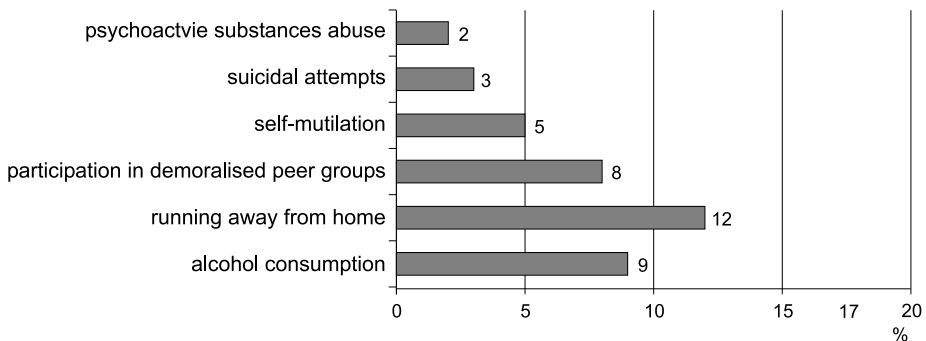
Graph 2. Catalogue of harmful behaviour occurring during socialisation period of recidivists aged 40 to 50

Moreover, the qualitative nature of the reconstructive research implied comparison analysis of the cases (not single variables), therefore two samples were selected from this group, concentrating on in-depth analysis of the respondents' childhood relations. The first sample included 25 persons aged 21 to 30 (according to the Penal Executive Code, a penitentiary recidivist is a term defining an adult, i.e. someone over 21 year of age), whereas the other sample included 15 persons aged 40 to 50. Uneven number of respondents in each group predominantly results from the quality of the gathered source material. In the qualitative analysis of a case it is necessary to gather more elaborate statements, however the respondents did not always provide such in-depth descriptions during the interviews. Nonetheless, while reconstructing experiences

(not comparing the variables), uneven selection of the sample does not limit the research as such project focuses on the search for common areas of experiences, not on the analysis of the frequency of occurrence of such experiences.

The age criteria of the respondents play significant part as it located them within different periods and social conditions. The young age group respondents experienced their childhood and socialisation in the 1990s, whereas the older ones in 1970s.

The attempt to confront these periods is essential, as stressed by Tadeusz Sakowicz, who claimed that there is a link between economic growth and the quality of the functioning of a given society[18]. Perhaps, within framework of initial hypotheses it can be assumed that the symptoms of parental negative behaviour towards children differ in terms of quality in these time perspectives. However, such hypothesis should be taken into careful consideration, as economic growth itself does not explicitly correspond to the level of moral functioning of the citizens[19].

It has been assumed that different social and economic conditions as well as distinctive lifestyle could constitute divergent atmosphere of socialisation, hence the relations with adults could also differ. Therefore, the objective of the research was on one hand to reconstruct children's relations with parents (although the resocialisation pedagogy and psychology literature prove their course is usually troublesome indeed), and on the other – to reconstruct and compare the quality of such relations between these two groups of respondents.

Issues described within these reflections are the result of accomplishment of field research in qualitative mode. The gathered source material turned was abundant as the documentation concerning given persons contained reports from various interviews carried out at different stages of serving the sentence of deprivation of liberty. Chronological categorisation of the contents as well as the reconstruction of the course of life, in particular concerning the process of socialisation and the youth, confirmed that the methodology of biographical research provided the most optimal theoretical perspective. Nonetheless, it is worth to stress the importance of the two perspectives of this method accomplishment. On one hand the explored biographies provided a source of subjective experiences, but on the other accomplished more overall goals, aiming at

---

[18]   T. Sakowicz, *Dysfunkcjonalność rodziny*, p. 100.
[19]   *Ibidem.*

application of biographical experiences as a source of information on social and cultural conditions of these persons' lives[20]. Such methodological convention encouraged to work out a methodical strategy concerning the analysis of the source material, as the technique of data organisation facilitated the search for common areas of experiences in order to classify the recognised experiences most generally. The mode of setting up categories of experiences is a legitimate approach in qualitative research[21] and manifests many practical values. Therefore, such methodical approach corresponds to the objective of the conducted research, as on theoretical level the goal was to reconstruct the experiences and the atmosphere of socialisation of nowadays recidivists, whereas the practical level implied the necessity to categorise biographical experiences in order to compare the quality of relations with adults of those socialised in socially and culturally different circumstances. Diversity of these conditions was accented in the distant perspective of the socialisation of the younger and the older persons.

The research problems, determining the direction of the empirical analysis correspond to the research objectives. They, in turn, were formulated as the following questions, i.e. 1. what is the picture of the relations with adults during the childhood of nowadays criminal recidivists, 2. do, and if so – to what extent, the qualities of relations with parents alter in different age groups.

Analysis of the research results

The reconstruction of relations with parents during childhood undeniably confirm already published theses, that the childhood of the criminals-to-be, particular recidivists, was difficult and turbulent at large. On average, they come from pathological families, having experienced psychical and psychological abuse, being neglected or abandoned by their parents. Such theses have been confirmed by the research results (Table 1), still it is worth to remember that such negative experiences occurred within both of the researched groups.

---

[20] D. Urbaniak-Zając, *Biograficzne perspektywy badacza*, in: *Uczenie się z (własnej) biografii*, eds. E. Dubas, W. Świtalski, Łódź 2011, pp. 20–21.

[21] E. Dubas, *Jak opracowywać materiał narracyjno-biograficzny? (Propozycja)*, in: *Uczenie się z (własnej) biografii*, eds. E. Dubas, W. Świtalski, Łódź 2011, pp. 245–246.

Table 1.   Manifestations of pathologies in families of origin in childhood experiences
              of the research respondents (young- and old-age group)

Specificity of parent's conduct	Younger generation account (N = 25)	Older generation account (N = 15)
Parents alcoholism	16	8
Parental violence towards own children	14	5
Lack of parental interest in their children's life	18	9
Unfulfilled children's basic needs, negligence	14	7
Promiscuity, often change of partners	3	1
Parental criminal liability	15	7
Permanent contact with depraved criminal groups	19	11

Source: own study.

Similarity of these negative experiences in both researched groups is strik-
ing. Polish society of the 1970s and 1990s evolved on the basis of social and eco-
nomic changes, however the specificity of the analysed families is coincident,
as living conditions and significance of the deviation factors (such as parents'
addiction, violence in the family or indifference) were not subject to altera-
tion. It also provides an evidence confirming that the general picture of a so-
ciety always includes pathogenetic environments that, despite changes in the
circumstances and lifestyles, do not transform as dynamically as the surround-
ing. Such thesis is additionally recognised by elaborate analysis of the literature
concerning research on the risk factors, predisposing to adoption of such crimi-
nogenic lifestyle. Analysis of the reconstruction of socialisiation experiences of
recidivists were carried out as early as in the 1960s and 1970s. Study works of
Stefan Batawia, Adam Strzembosz, Anna Firkowska-Monkiewicz[22] or Helena
Kołakowska-Przełomiec[23] proved that the group of recidivists embraces those

---

[22]   A. Firkowska-Mankiewicz, *Czynniki biopsychiczne w przestępczości nieletnich*, Warszawa
       1972, p. 168
[23]   H. Kołakowska-Przełomiec, *Przestępczość i nieprzystosowanie społeczne nieletnich w ge-
       nezie przestępczości dorosłych*, Warszawa 1977, p. 220

who were not properly taken care of in their childhood or experienced signifi-
cant deprivation of basic needs, whereas their parents would be often addicted
to alcohol, with prison experiences from the past. Future, grown-up criminals
quickly began their experiments with alcohol, consequently being dropped out
of schools. Comparing research results from 1960s and 1970s with the gath-
ered source material it can be concluded that the circumstances of inappro-
priate socialisation have not significantly changed. Contemporary researches
of Maria Jordan indicate similar manifestations of conduct within families of
teenagers subject to social maladjustment. The families of the researched youth
(N = 259), were most frequently and regularly subject to alcoholism, lack of
control and care taken of the child, violence towards the spouse and children,
criminogenic lifestyle, poverty, chronic unemployment, work overload, having
been penalised and last but not least – negative influence of the external envi-
ronment[24].

The researched groups can be divided into subgroups on the basis of dif-
ferent relations with adults and other experiences gained during the period of
socialisation. Grouping cases in social research is generally a difficult task as
experiences coming from given environments are incoherent, involving dif-
ferent persons and concerning different circles of social influences. Therefore,
while searching for common experiences, subjective interpretation of the re-
spondents tackling their childhood experiences is indispensible, as they are the
ones who indicate what events and relations were subjectively crucial. Such in-
terpretation occurs when given persons try to depict relations from their child-
hood with current, recidivist life situation. Relations with adults and patterns of
behaviour that emerge within remain correlated with the first symptoms of de-
moralised acts. Moreover, the respondents revealed personal approach towards
failures of the socialisation that subsequently led to their deviation. Empirical
analysis of such relations with adults that were subjectively important is there-
fore grounded in personal thoughts, whereas its disclosure is advantageous for
such qualitative research.

First of the distinguished group referred to those, whose parents / caretakers
expressed extremely aggressive attitudes, virtually harassing the children. With
this regard it did not always concern both parents, as in most cases men would
be the aggressors (fathers or stepfathers), intimidating the entire family. Such
aggression was direct, i.e. "during the carousal the stepfather would often not let

---

[24]   M. Jordan, *Stan opieki*, p. 127.

me get inside the house", or indirect, "my mother also had to do the same what the father did and wanted, (…) as he was the breadwinner". The experiences of violence recalled in the statements referred to the description of a house discipline, ranging from harsh rigour to ongoing harassment. For instance, as a child, one of the respondents went to the family diagnostic and consultancy centre to ask for being placed in an orphanage, since as he recalled "as a child I was scared to come back home". This case also considered parents' addiction to alcohol, on which they spend all their money, simultaneously bullying and harassing own children. In other case, father's hostility was solely directed at his son, as "my sister was talented and met their expectations".

Almost corresponding experiences were shared by the older group, as in their families, with violence and all forms of child's negligence, the reconstructive description of the condition of socialisation were very much alike. It is, for instance, reflected in a recalled situation when the mother was bringing up her child alone, but did not manifest aggressive behaviour towards own offspring. Her son was forced to provide for the family (including the mother's cohabite) at the age of 15 and claims it was the reason disturbing his school graduation. He reached for alcohol, soon becoming addicted to it. This group embraced coherent experiences from pathological families, where children were witnesses to carousal and fights, parents using violence and with sibling having served, or serving punishment of deprivation of liberty.

In both groups the respondents described their father's or stepfather's behaviour, with their mother's actions in the background of the course of the family life. Such perspective of recollection results from the fact of researching adult men, nonetheless, it is worth to pay attention to the significant difference in the descriptions revealed in the older age group. Namely, their childhood accounts involved other persons manifesting physical or even sexual violence. In 5 cases it concerned elderly brother that mentally and physically bullied the younger sibling, whereas in 3 cases the brother would sexually harass own sibling. Parents would not react to such actions, neither protect younger children, manifesting helplessness towards the perpetrator. Cases of sexual assault by older children from orphanage were also reported. In each of these cases the sexually abused children were escaping from home and committed self-mutilation. It must be remembered that such experiences of sexual assault are considered as shameful in prison circumstances, hence describing them requires significant distance. Perhaps the age and life experiences motivated the older ones to recount these facts, whereas the younger ones were still unready to confront it. It is a crucial matter as it may imply a false conviction that sexual criminogenic behaviour to-

wards children does not take place contemporarily, what is nothing but a false impression. Nonetheless, none of the young respondents mentioned it.

It is worth to emphasise that as far as being victim of sexual assault is concerned, the researched respondents served their sentence for sexual crimes (e.g. rapes) committed in their adult life. Searching for links between childhood experiences and further criminal career is not within the scope of these reflections, but it is worth to undertake such type of pedagogical research into socialisation experiences and the manner of criminogenic activity, especially taking into consideration that the offenders of such crimes declared that the sexual violence allowed them to feel someone stronger, i.e. an aggressor, not a victim.

Second group consisted of those who were abandoned by the parents or one of them. In this regard the reconstructed experiences are of dual character. On one hand the children's biographies are stigmatised by a traumatic experience of being left by the parent. The father was the person most frequently leaving families (22 cases), with 5 cases of mothers abandoning their children and spouse. Repercussions of such situations were two-directed as the abandoned mother tried to get involved in work and providing for the family so effortful that it moved children onto the margin of her interest and attention. In 4 cases relations with the mother were positive, but with insignificant contact, e.g. "my mother worked a lot for us, so we could have better life, but the money was hardly enough for the bills and food (…) there were no rules, I did what I wanted to". In the recalled cases relations with adults, i.e. the mother, grandparents or sibling, were referred to as positive. Mothers were often supported by the grandparents in upbringing, but after the father's departure material situation of a family was difficult, hence encouraged the young to steal, which was often the point of departure for the behavioural pathogenesis. Second direction was determined by the mothers' position, as being left by the partner, they would often fall into addiction, changing partners and consequently becoming indifferent to the problems of own children. At the same time noteworthy tendency of children to self-mutilation and alcohol abuse emerged, as according to the respondent it was their way to deal with being left by the parent in their childhood. "When the father moved out (the son was 6) I wanted to hang myself, but I didn't eventually", "I drank a lot of alcohol (including alcohol poisoning, A.U.)". In other case, when a 9-year-old boy was left by his father, the child would frequently commit acts of self-mutilation, reaching for drugs and alcohol as a child, consequently falling into addiction to drugs as early as a teenager.

Quite different, but equally difficult experiences resulted from situations when the father passed way. Although the experiences of relations with a par-

ent had been positive, father's premature death transformed the child's life entirely. Still, it does not imply being abandoned, as before the parents' death such group of children had not manifested any symptoms of problematic or harmful behaviour whatsoever. Therefore, such situation indicates the necessity to distinguish a new subgroup of different experiences.

The third group referred to those, whose parents / caretakers did not become involved and engaged in the process of socialisation or upbringing, being indifferent to their needs, e.g. "they did not work (…) did not care for us, children" (30). On one hand it was caused by the parents' alcohol addiction, however, the sibling was additionally involved in criminal activity. The greed for profits was the most frequent motive for demoralised conduct, as it meant possessing that, what others had. In the older age respondents group poverty of the family resulted from the lack of will to undertake work and was generally related to alcohol addiction. The described family situation was of dual nature, i.e. there was poverty, or quite the contrary – material situation was sufficient. Such perspective of the reconstruction of the family of origin results mainly from the specificity of the social background of the researched. They come from Upper Silesia, so during their childhood their parents were working (e.g. coal miner fathers) and could provide good standards of living for the families. Moreover, the average living standards in the 1970s were accessible for the teenagers in such environment. Therefore, in case of the older persons the description of the living conditions was not perceived as critical as in the case of a younger age group. The younger ones stressed poverty or parents' attempts to fulfil their needs, however according to the respondents their incomes were insufficient in order to meet all their wants. Hence, they would often steal during their childhood to have what others possessed, whereas in case of the older persons, their crimes were accompanied by aggressive behaviour under influence of alcohol or a peer group.

Among those who were abandoned as children (in case of both of the researched groups) drug and alcohol abuse emerged as early as at the age of 13 or 17 – with the daily use of smart drugs, marihuana, LSD, or 16 – "when the amphetamine appeared, I would take it even twice a day". It was additionally accompanied by dropping out of school. Recalling the descriptions of recidivists they would often commit crimes under the influence of alcohol, hence, the grown-up prisoners admitted to be still having problems with alcohol abuse. Abandoning own child was usually related to the court intervention and placing such child in a special purpose school and education centre, but could be also of informal character, as parents would often place children in the grandpar-

ents' house. Lack of control over behaviour and numerous, notorious contacts of their parents with depraved environment encouraged the young to operate in antagonistic groups. Dropping out of school took place with simultaneous engagement in peer groups activities, spending time away from home, not coming back home for night etc, e.g. "it was impossible to live in the family (28 l.), „…you know, I wasn't there anymore, I preferred (…) to spend time outdoors than in my own home".

The fourth group, quantitatively the smallest one, embraced those, who declared positive relations with the adults. It is a particular group as it naturally raises the question of the genesis of demoralised behaviour, especially that it concerned not a sporadic, experimental deviant behaviour, but those representing consolidated criminogenic lifestyle. Since their socialisation took appropriate course and relations with adults were assessed positively, why their social functioning became disturbed?

There were two subgroups of those with different experiences. One embraced persons whose life changed after the death of a parent or both of them. They found themselves all alone, as they had no contact with their grandparents hence were placed in an orphanage. The death of a parent was linked to termination of current living conditions that significantly changed (deteriorated) after such traumatic event. "My father hanged himself (…) and the problems began when I was moved to the emergency shelter for children when he died (26)". Then the respondent repeatedly committed acts of self-mutilation and suicidal attempts, getting involved in depraved peer group. The way to ease the suffering after father's death included drug and alcohol abuse. The boy's stay in special purpose school and education centre marked the period when pedagogical problems became accompanied by early penalisation for offences. The course of other children's life when mothers began to bring up the offspring alone was alike. Being overwhelmed by the duties made the mothers incapable of fulfilling upbringing tasks after the partner's death. "…When my mother worked I was alone, without any care" – in such situation the child began to spend time in a depraved environment, as he "had to count on myself". Such aspect implies significant problem of further research as many mothers bring up their offspring alone, and still, the growing up children participate in family life, providing support, not avoiding contact with own parent. However, in other cases the hypothetical incapability of emotional handling with a loss of a parent or both parents prevailed, i.e. because the mother overtook external tasks of maintaining family and the house, emotional closeness with a child and control of its behaviour dissolved. Such hypothesis is confirmed by the fact

that respondents from this group stressed that they "were left alone", "didn't see their mothers", as "she didn't often have time" or "she didn't control what I was doing", so "I was doing what I wanted".

Second subgroup consisted of those, who had good contact with adults and their process of socialisation took place appropriately. Parents were caring, e.g. "they tried to apply various upbringing methods". Parents' engagement and lack of distinguished factors of family destruction occurred far less frequent in both of the researched groups. In the course of auto-anamnestic interviews they were generally unable to reveal personal motivation or events that could have led them towards criminogenic lifestyle. Nonetheless, two matters are worth emphasising. First of all, socially harmful acts occurred in both groups at the age of 16 or 17, not earlier. Second issue refers to the increased role of the peer environment and vision of living in want. Criminal activity of the younger persons was related to the drug dealing, additionally empowered by stealing for the profits in both groups. It is striking that the relations with the families deteriorated due to their parasitic lifestyle, or incidents of stealing in own family homes. Currently, their relations with parents differ significantly – some maintain permanent contact, whereas others have been rejected by the parents and sibling, hence they have no possibility to return home after having served the sentence.

Conclusion

Process of generalisation of these experiences provided interesting picture of the reconstructions of family relations. The reconstruction of relations with adults is limited to the group of closest relatives, i.e. the father, the mother, sibling, far more seldom grandparents. The statements of both younger and older recidivists also revealed significance of those from social surrounding, i.e. parents' or sibling's friends, also with prison experiences in their biographies. Such withdrawn social enclave did not allow school teachers or tutors from child care centres or probation officers to play any crucial, positive part in the children's lives. Probation officers were involved in 12 out of 40 cases, however their interventions were described in negative categories, as they would not help, but solely supervise, hence the respondents tried to avoid them. The role of social workers emerged only in the context of the source of provision for the families, particularly those addicted to alcohol, as in such case the social support institu-

tion would provide and manage their finances (i.e. the social benefits). There were no positive experiences reported from the childhood period in relations with the representatives of social welfare services despite the fact that those children's experiences (particularly from the first and second subgroup) were notably traumatic. Perhaps it results from the fact that as children they did not comprehend the family issues, so the social services focused on contacts with adult parents, not their children. Additionally, lack of active participation of the teachers was reported. It can be, however, justified by the relatively short period of these children's attendance to school. Among 40 researched recidivists majority have basic (or even uncompleted basic) education, accomplished with several school year repetitions. The school was dropped out during their early adolescence, with absence as the cause for appointing probation officer supervision.

Analysis of the pathogenesis processes provides with similarly interesting conclusions drawn from both groups. Pathogenesis has been defined by Polish criminologist, Stefan Batawia, as a phenomena combining both personal activity and influence of environmental factors. According to this author, "aetiology of the crime and moral structure of a criminal should be always perceived (…) genetically, not statistically, with retrospection of the complexity of social conditions"[25]. Therefore, pedagogical perspective of the childhood analysis as well as children's relations with the parents during socialisation is within the framework of research into the factors consolidating criminogenic lifestyle. Relations with adults subject to analysis are significant for the process of initiating criminal career, but also due to the fact they shaped given pattern of social functioning, as patterns and conditions of a family life exposed children to the contact with depraved environment, leaving them without appropriate care and surveillance. Analysying the course of each biography of nowadays recidivists it is striking that there was no alternative to the depraved peer environment. Therefore, way of spending their leisure time, free and unlimited in the duration and quality was far more attractive than school career marked with repeating given class or school failures. Hence, it is of paramount importance to compare the catalogue of behaviours that occurred in the childhood and early adolescence of those researched from two groups. Therefore, since the specificity of family functioning in the 1970s and 1990s appeared similar, it throws light on the issue of living conditions that might have altered the nature of manifested behaviours.

---

[25]   From: L. Tyszkiewicz, *Kryminogeneza*, p. 217.

Presentation of the research results responds to the first research problem, as it provides a picture of relations with adults. On the basis of the statements analysis groups of both positive and negative experiences emerged. As early as at the stage of formulating assumptions it seemed self-evident that relations with parents and caretakers of nowadays recidivists will rather be disadvantageous, as reflected in number of studies within social and resocialisational pedagogy. Nonetheless, the value of the conducted analysis lies in the revelation of the relation to the experiences that commonly shape the lifestyle, i.e. criminogenesis. These issues are particularly important for the resocialisation practice, undertaken both within auto-anamnestic diagnosis and the therapeutic forecasts. Referring to the second research problem, a distinctive stagnation of the communities affected by a deviation or pathology of behaviours must be emphasised. Initial assumptions that the living conditions can alter the catalogue of socialisation disturbances were confirmed to only a small degree, as the essential difference resulted from a range of other factors such as drugs, smart drugs or gaming machines.

Comparison of the presented behaviours indicate significant similarities, as the process of pathogenesis in the childhood or early adolescences followed similar path. However, two differences must be taken into consideration, as among the younger group of respondents drugs and smart drugs abuse provided important foundation for the pathogenesis. The frequency of contact with drugs was comparable to the alcohol consumption at their early age, whereas in case of the older group, the alcohol consumption prevailed. Such situation results from wider access to drugs, but simultaneously indicates that large number of recidivist is in the addiction risk group, including the smart drugs. As far as the older group is concerned, psychoactive substances such as glues or solvents (not specific drugs) were sporadic.

The second difference tackles the issue of parental surveillance and control over their children. Respondents of both groups indicated relatively frequent lack of parental interest in children's problems, however it was not always accompanied by running away from home. It was, however, replaced by expressions such as "I didn't come back home for night", "I was out of home all the time", "I passed by my other in the doorway". In the older persons' account running away from home was a way to protect own self against parents' or sibling's aggression. Such acts also resulted from the pressure of a peer group. Regardless of the motivation, they were frequent, whereas the language of nowadays youth does not contain such category of behaviour, what may indicate certain change in the social conditions. It is worth to explore the genesis of such changes as it

may be assumed that the significant role of money caused change in the lifestyle patterns. Impoverished society that pays great attention to the costs of everyday maintenance ceased to become a support for children running away from home. It is more and more difficult to stay at someone's place, as it is costly. The other issue concerns the fact that running away from home is currently no longer dominating in the traditional canon of demoralised or rebellious behaviour, i.e. it seems to be no longer popular. Moreover, what's the point to run away from home, if parents do not care whether the children return home for night and what they do outdoors anyway. Such parental approach was palpable within relations of the older age group, nonetheless running away from home was something important to them, a way of promotion in the peer hierarchy. Nowadays it seems to have lost its significance.

Addiction to gaming machines appears irrelevant in the context of the entire research, as only two prisoners indicated that they were spending all their free time in the game salons, where they would often lose all the money, or even steal to continue the game. It is fully justified to claim that such conduct occurred only within the younger age group. Lack of access to such type of activity in the 1970s explains why there were no such activities at that time. Notwithstanding, even nowadays it is not a frequent way of spending leisure time in the adolescence period, perhaps due to the fact that most of the respondents come from impoverished environments, hence as children they had no chance to earn own income necessary to play. On the other hand, their parents' resources did not allow to have access to it either. Such conclusion is confirmed by the fact that addiction to gaming machines was reported among those, who assessed their parents' material situation as moderately sufficient, with no signs of poverty in the family home.

REFERENCES:

Buss D.M., *Morderca za ścianą*, Gdańsk 2007.

Dubas E., *Jak opracowywać materiał narracyjno-biograficzny? (Propozycja)*, in: *Uczenie się z (własnej) biografii*, eds. E. Dubas, W. Świtalski, Łódź 2011.

Firkowska-Mankiewicz A., *Czynniki biopsychiczne w przestępczości nieletnich*, Warszawa 1972.

Goleman D., *Inteligencja społeczna*, Poznań 2007.

Hinde R., *On describing relationships*, „Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry" 1976, vol. 17.

Jordan M., *Stan opieki i kontroli wychowawczej w rodzinach młodzieży zagrożonej i niedostosowanej społecznie*, in: *Dewiacyjne aspekty współczesnego świata. Przejawy – zapobieganie – terapia*, ed. M. Prokosz, Toruń 2004.

Kołakowska-Przełomiec H., *Przestępczość i nieprzystosowanie społeczne nieletnich w genezie przestępczości dorosłych*, Warszawa 1977.

Mead G.H., *Umysł, osobowość, społeczeństwo*, Warszawa 1975.

Obaro O.A., *Risk Factors in Childhood Anti-social Behavior and Adulthood Criminal Career*, "American International Journal of Social Science" 2013, vol. 2/6.

Olechnowicz H., *Wczesne zapobieganie agresywności i przestępczości młodocianych*, "Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Kryminologicznego im. prof. Stanisława Batawii" 1998, nr 3.

Rode M., *Styl myślenia przestępczego. Podstawy teoretyczne i diagnostyczne*, Warszawa 2013.

Stanik J.M., *Rodzaje popełnianych przestępstw a różnice osobowościowe ich sprawców*, "Archiwum Kryminologii" 2007/8, t. 29–30.

Sakowicz T., *Dysfunkcjonalność rodziny a resocjalizacja*, Kraków 2006.

Sakowicz T., *Wybrane aspekty środowiska rodzinnego w percepcji i ocenie osób osadzonych w polskich zakładach karnych*, Kraków 2009.

Trivers R., *The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism*, "Quarterly Review of Biology" 1971, vol. 46.

Tyszkiewicz L., *Kryminogeneza i sposoby jej badania*, „Archiwum Kryminologii" 2007/08, t. 29–30.

Urban B., *Geneza i różnicowanie się zaburzeń w zachowaniu* in: *Dewiacyjne aspekty współczesnego świata. Przejawy – zapobieganie – terapia*, ed. M. Prokosz, Toruń 2004.

Urbaniak-Zając D., *Biograficzne perspektywy badacza*, in: *Uczenie się z (własnej) biografii*, eds. E. Dubas, W. Świtalski, Łódź 2011.

Wilson E.O., *Consilience. The Unity of Knowledge*, New York 1999.

SUMMARY

The research tackles the reconstruction of childhood experiences of nowadays adult recidivists. The qualitative reconstruction analysis was applied to explore the experiences of child-parents/caretakers relations, embracing two groups of respondents. The first group included young persons aged 22 to 30 (25 persons), whereas the second embraced older persons aged 40 to 50 (15 persons). The aim of the research was to capture the childhood experiences and parental pattern of behaviour towards own children. Another crucial aspect concerned description of activities that occurred during early demoralisation, subject to comparison within both groups. It is worth to emphasise that both groups essentially differ not only in terms of the age, but predominantly in terms of period of socialisation as their childhood took place in 1970s and 1990s, hence concerned entirely different social conditions in Poland of that time. The attempt to generalise the childhood experiences and reference to the results of

the analysis to the general specificity of the pathogenesis process among penitentiary recidivists was equally essential.

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł podejmuje analizę procesu patologizacji i kryminalizacji dzisiejszych przestępców recydywistów. Przedmiotem zainteresowania badań nie jest aktualna sytuacja życiowa tych osób, ale próba rekonstrukcji relacji z dorosłymi, wówczas gdy jako dzieci byli socjalizowani w rodzinach. W tym celu ogólnymi badaniami objęto recydywistów penitencjarnych, aktualnie osadzonych w zakładzie karnym. Analiza ma na celu porównanie procesów socjalizacji przypadających na dwa okresy. Są one wyznaczone przez kryterium wieku respondentów, ponieważ ono sytuuje ich dzieciństwo w różnych okresach i warunkach społecznych. Osoby młode przeżywały swoje dzieciństwo i socjalizację w latach 90. XX w., zaś osoby starsze w latach 70. XX w. Opisywane w niniejszych rozważaniach zagadnienia są efektem realizacji badań terenowych, utrzymanych w konwencji jakościowej. Zebrany materiał źródłowy okazał się bardzo bogaty, ponieważ w dokumentach osobopoznawczych zawarto zapisy wielu wywiadów, prowadzonych w różnych okresach odbywania kary.

ARKADIUSZ URBANEK – Department of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences University of Wrocław
e-mail: aur@pedagogika.uni.wroc.pl