

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL MESSAGES ON THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF TEENAGERS

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ABSTRACT:

Aim. The aim of the study is to find what Parental Messages (PM) modern Bulgarian teenagers receive in the process of important social and cultural changes in the post-totalitarian society and which ones are 'responsible' for the growing aggression in and outside schools. The Parental Messages are statements made by parents towards the younger generation that are transmitted in the socio-psychic and the sociocultural space as undisputable rules, pieces of wisdom and values, i.e. they form both the content of the Parent Ego state and the sociocultural Parent governing the behaviour and the attitude of the people.

Methods. We chose 64 statements commonly known in the Bulgarian sociocultural space were presented to 284 teenagers aged 14-18 to find out what messages the contemporary teenagers receive from their parents. Then we chose 40 of the teenagers and in addition we tested them with the Buss-Durkee inventory. The Parental Messages received by the aggressive and the non-aggressive teenagers were compared.

Results. The study found significant differences in the Parental Messages received by the two groups which is a premise for different content of the Parent Ego state and different behavior of the two groups.

Conclusions. The results obtained so far lead to the conclusion that the Parental Messages the aggressive adolescents were given from their parents in childhood and continue to be given during adolescence take the form of the content of the Parent Ego state and in this case a Parent who is able to directly realise itself in aggressive behaviour because this is the behaviour which is 'allowed' by the parents (mainly by the fathers). Parents teach their children to be aggressive, though they are not likely to fully realise that.

Originality. A study with the author's own methodology (questionnaire about the Parental Messages) was conducted among teenagers and the results were compared to the results from the Buss-Durkey inventory.

Key words: Parental messages, Buss-Durkee inventory, Transactional analysis

The upbringing of children in the family is done through conscious educational influences, subordinated to the basic moral norms adopted in the society and in the social group which the family members belong to, as well as by personal example from the parents and through statements from the family

members, which in practice express (seen from the perspective of their own personality) the social experience, moral norms and methods for successful achievement of the goals in life and the establishment of the relationships that the person sees as necessary and acceptable. Thus, education is a system of conscious influences, as well as multiple influences on the child that are not perceived or seen by the parents as educating, but in their essence they are educating. The meaning, direction and purpose of these influences often do not coincide with or even contradict consciously the norms and rules adopted by the parents. In fact, it will be better to use the term 'formative' instead of 'educating' about such impacts because the term 'education' used as a term in pedagogical psychology and in pedagogy carries meaning, which implies the existence of by all means *positive, organized and conscious* influences. When revealing these influences, which strongly influence the formation of the psyche, the character, the attitudes, the values of the child, we often have to turn to the unconscious or semiconscious sphere of the human psyche.

In recent decades aggressiveness and the aggressive behaviour have become one of the major research topics in the psychological literature, especially in the research on children and adolescents. A number of publications on this issue have been published in the Bulgarian psychological literature, for example Rumen Stamatov's "Child aggression" (2008), the two volumes by Plamen Kalchev (2009, 2010), containing the Bulgarian adaption of scales for the study of aggressiveness; Ognyan Koychev (2015a, 2015b), Jonka Baltadzhieva (2007, 2012, 2013); N. Boyadzhieva and Pepa Miteva (2008), Bilyana Velikova-Tsonkova (2015), Diana Bakalova (2003), etc. Since the years during which the formation of the personality takes place are very important for the later behaviour of the individual as an adult, the study, the recommendations and the real influences must start from the very beginning of the development of the individual – from the childhood and the adolescence.

Another reason for the increased interest in aggressiveness are the real difficulties faced by teachers in their work in present times. They are determined not as much by the increase of the aggressiveness of the children and the adolescents compared to the previous decades, but by the fact that the change of the style of the pedagogical interactions in the school gradually eliminates the strong authoritarianism on the part of the teachers, allowing for a free expression of both the positive aspects of the children's and adolescents' behaviour and the negative ones. In this changed atmosphere aggression issues are highlighted with particular clarity. From the poll conducted by the author among the psychologists in the schools in the city of Plovdiv, it emerges that "The most commonly reported by the psychologists problem is the most common problem in the schools in general is bad discipline and aggressive behaviour. It was pointed out by 68% of the respondents" (Levkova, 2017a, p. 140). The answers to the following question from the questionnaire "What are the most important issues that need to be emphasized so that your work has a maximum effect?" show that 82% of the respondents point at aggression and aggressive behaviour first. "Modern psychology does not offer a clear view on

the causes that provoke aggressive behaviour in childhood. It is a fact, however, that parents are the main source of copied patterns of behaviour in children, including the aggressive. If the parents behave aggressively when they communicate, it is very likely that the children will include such reactions in their own behavioural repertoire. Risks arise even with responsible parents“ (Slavcheva-Andonova, 2017, p. 218).

The parental behaviour that influences child and adolescent aggression can be both nonverbal and verbal. From early childhood, communication with adults is of crucial importance for the development of children. Moreover, from the second year of their life, children begin to show what the authors call “sensitivity to the influences from the adult“ and aspiration to earn the respect of the adult (Tagareva, 2017).

In the theory of Transactional analysis (TA), the influences of the adult on the child are considered a base for development of a specific Ego structure, containing all influences from the parents adopted without reflection and critical thinking and after that internalized in a way which makes them equivalent to the child’s own experience. To emphasize their origin, namely, from the parents and their verbal and nonverbal behaviour ‘recorded’ by the child mainly by the age of 6, this state of the Ego is called the Parent. This Ego state automatically switches on when people raise their children and it carries within itself the traditions of upbringing children that have come to us from previous generations. The Parent Ego state has the ability to function in two ways: it reproduces the parental behaviour and statements in relation to other people or it functions inwardly. When functioning inwardly, the Parent Ego state can block certain activities of the Adult and the Child (the other two Ego states) to redirect them or to form specific attitudes of the individual toward himself/herself, toward the world, toward the interactions with the others, toward the values, etc. (Brecard, Hawkes, 2015). Thomas Harris calls the Parental records a “taught concept of life“ (Harris, 1991, p. 39). In order to accomplish this ‘teaching’, The Parent Ego state uses the so-called Parental messages (PM) which are statements addressed in different situations personally to the child as ‘lessons’ or ‘life wisdom’, as something that is self-explanatory (life axioms) and as statements exchanged between adults in the presence of the child, etc. These Parental messages coming from the parents of the child turn into the contents of his/her own Ego states - above all into the content of his/her own Parent Ego state and begin to manage his/her behaviour.

In the psychological literature the research on the messages that the parents address to their children are extremely rare. In most cases discussing the topic of verbal parental impacts on the personality of the child, the authors rely primarily on the observations made during their practical experience–psychoanalytic, consultative, etc. This is also the case in the publications of professionals in the field of Transactional analysis but although they often use the Parental messages identified in the process of their practical counseling and psychotherapeutic works they have not devoted (as far as the author of this article is aware) a purposeful scientific research to them. Here we will mention as structured studies only two which are not in the TA paradigm: Rodica Tocu’s study

(Tocu, 2014), which, however, is more focused on the parental beliefs and attitudes that define the style of the parental behaviour, and the study of Elisabeth Vera and colleagues (Vera et al., 2017) on the relationship between the Parental messages and the harassment of the adolescents in ethnic minorities.

In order to fill this gap in the scientific research and to study specific, and to a great extent, typical Parental messages that have been found in the national psychology of the Bulgarian population, 64 messages relatively common among the Bulgarian adult population were identified. This was done through the work of a special team of specialists familiar with Transaction analysis. A large part of the Parental messages has negative meaning and direction, though not all. The prevailing number of the negative statements is explained by the fact that they are much easier to identify since they are often similar in meaning and structure because they represent life 'wisdoms' transmitted from one Parent Ego state to another. These are records of behaviour passed through the generations from one Parent Ego state to another Parent Ego state and they form something we might call a 'socio-cultural Parent' (Levkova, Marinov, Minchev, 2017). P. Drego calls it "Cultural Parent" (Drego, 2009) but in our opinion the term 'socio-cultural Parent' is more suitable to the Bulgarian conditions, as the word 'cultural' may lead to misunderstandings. Another part of the negative messages are common negative reactions of the Child Ego state of the parents, but they are recorded by the child's psyche not in his/her Child Ego state, but in his/her Parent since he/she hears them from his/her parents. In the Bulgarian culture the positive messages are harder to identify because they are 'unacceptable': people are still guided by the maxims "Do not praise the children," "Caress the child only when he/she is sleeping", etc. The presence of multiple negative Parental messages is fully in line with those identified by the TA professionals worldwide, e.g. Dmitriy Shustov.

The aim of the study is to find what Parental Messages (PM) modern Bulgarian teenagers receive in the process of important social and cultural changes in the post-totalitarian society and which ones are 'responsible' for the growing aggression in and outside schools.

The subject of the study are adolescents aged 14-18. 310 respondents participated in the study. During the processing of the data, 26 of them were rejected for various reasons: there were blank cells left in the answer sheet, the respondents' ethnicity was not Bulgarian, etc. As a result, the data table contains responses from 284 respondents. They are distributed by gender as follows: boys - 139; girls - 145 (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents by Sex and Age

	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	17 years old	18 years old	All
Girls	26	16	18	46	39	145
Boys	16	18	29	42	34	139
All	42	34	47	88	73	284

Source: author

Methods. The study was conducted in two stages:

A) First stage. A specially designed inventory for studying Parental messages was used on the teenagers. We chose 64 commonly known in the Bulgarian sociocultural space statements which were presented to 284 teenagers aged 14-18 to find out what messages the contemporary teenagers receive from their parents.

B) Second stage. We chose 40 of the teenagers and in addition we tested them with the Buss-Durkee inventory. The Parental messages received by the aggressive and the non-aggressive teenagers were compared.

The following hypotheses were formulated:

A) First stage:

- Hypothesis H_01 - The different Parental messages (PM) will be presented with the same frequency in the survey results.
- Hypothesis H_02 - The results of the study will be located in the normal (Gaussian) distribution.
- Hypothesis H_03 - There are no statistically significant differences in the frequency of the PM in the adolescents from the two sexes.
- Hypothesis H_04 - The results can be distributed in quantiles and they can be subject to qualitative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis H_01 . The first hypothesis H_01 was rejected because the results of the study show that the different PM are presented with different frequency in the respondents' data.

Since the null hypothesis was rejected, we must accept that the PM we studied actually represent part of the content of the Parent Ego state of the adolescents. Otherwise, they would have occurred with the same frequency and would not have distinctive functions.

Hypothesis H_02 . The second hypothesis is logically related to the first one. The applying of the Shapiro-Wilk test (Mann-Whitney U test variant) shows that $W = 0.93864$, $p\text{-value} = 0.00328$. This gives us reason to reject the null hypothesis for data normality (the $p\text{-value}$ is too small - below 0.025). Fig. 1 shows that the first fifteen and the last ten values are not 'normal'. The distribution has the so-called heavy tails. Therefore, Hypothesis H_02 - "The results of the study will be located in the normal (Gaussian) distribution." must be rejected. This has a significant importance in the discussion of the fourth hypothesis - H_04 .

Hypothesis H_03 . To test hypothesis H_03 , the Two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used, where: $D = 0.10938$, $p\text{-value} = 0.8386$; alternative hypothesis: two-sided. Such a large value of the $p\text{-value}$ (above 0.05) does not allow for the null hypothesis to be rejected.

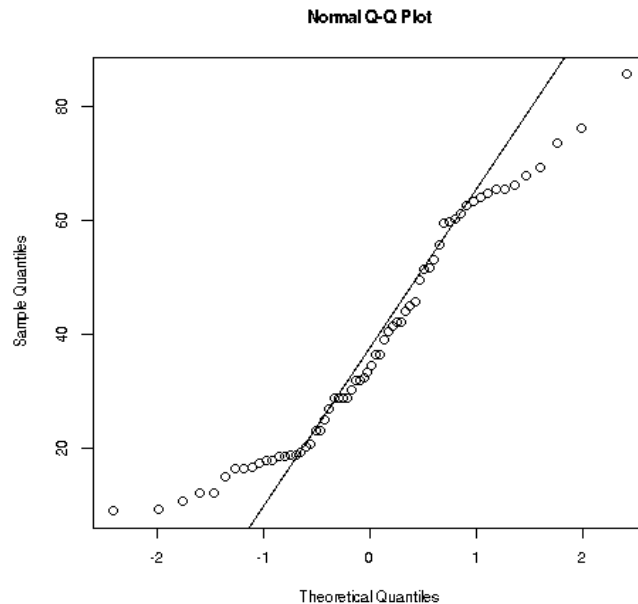


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the data distribution

Source: author

The statistical processing of the data indicates that there are actually no statistically significant differences in the frequency with which PM occur in the adolescents from the two sexes. Consequently, hypothesis H_03 is accepted. This is a rather surprising result, because on the basis of purely speculative assumptions and on the basis of observations from the counseling practice, we are usually led to believe that the boys and the girls should and do receive different PM from their parents. This is based on the natural assumption that boys and girls are reared differently (according to their gender). So, the results that were obtained deserve a more careful analysis and further research. This is a new, interesting field for research.

Hypothesis H_04 . "The results can be distributed into quantiles and subjected to qualitative analysis". The statistical processing gives a median of 33.98 and a standard deviation of 20, the mean being 38.41. Therefore, we can divide the results by quantiles in the following way (Table 2 and Table 3):

- Group 1 (first quantile) – low values - from 9.15% to 19.27% of the respondents respond with 'Yes';
- Group 2 (second quantile) – mean values 'A' - from 19.28% to 33.98%;
- Group 3 (third quantile) – mean values 'B' - from 33.99% to 56.60%;
- Group 4 (fourth quantile) – high values - from 56.61% to 85.56%.

What is interesting in the analysis of the quantiles is that the Parental messages which have a strong negative emotional load, often found during a coun-

seling sessions with problematic individuals, in the sample are distributed primarily in the first and second quantiles – group 1 and group 2, with the maximum frequency for group 1 being 19.27% and for group 2 – 33.98%. This shows that the maximum of the respondents who have received the PM from group 1 is only 19.27%. Moreover, this is the maximum, i.e. most of the PM in this group are found in an even smaller number of respondents, the lowest rate being 9.15. This is PM63 “If you do not... (do this, say that) I will no longer love you!” i.e. less than 10% of the teenagers report that they have heard this or a similar threatening manipulative statement from their parents. Nevertheless, the fact that 9.15% from the respondents have heard it is disturbing in terms of an ideal where the parents would never say such a terrible thing to their child. Moreover, the teenagers who indicated that they have heard this PM have not by any means heard only this statement but other negative PM as well.

In the second and third quantiles we find a wide variety of PM, and it can definitely be pointed out that as the share of the respondents reporting a certain PM increases, the probability that this PM has a positive meaning also increases. This is most clearly seen in the last quantile – the fourth one, where the share of the teenagers who responded positively increases from 59.51 to the extremely high number of 85.56. Here are included Parental messages like PM10 “Fight for your rights” – 85.56%; PM64 – An idiom referring to both sexes and meaning “You must be strong, manly, you must cope well with difficulties” – 67.96%; PM39 “I can see something in you” (something positive) – 65.49%; PM7 “You are mum’s/dad’s clever boy/girl” – 63.38%, etc. There is an extremely high percentage of respondents who were given a PM which emphasizes the importance of education: PM34 “The most important is to have higher education” – 64.79%. A high percentage of respondents have also been given PM50 “Get a university diploma in order not to work” – almost 60%! Therefore, it is possible that the value of education is not perceived by the parents in its essence but in opposition to physical labour, which the Bulgarians still consider to be the only kind of labour, i.e. intellectual labour ‘is not work’; thus higher education gives you the opportunity to avoid hard work.

There are two more groups of PM in the fourth quantile. The first group contains PM which express positive emotional experiences and a positive attitude to life, such as PM42 “Tomorrow is another day” – 73.59%; PM25 “Enjoy things as long as you can” – 66.2%; PM43 “You only live once” – 59.86%. The second group of PM includes negative statements, but with a relatively low negative emotional load, e.g. slight reproaches such as: PM13 “Are you going to stay in bed all day?” – 61.27%; PM19 “You easily trust people” – 62.67%; PM51 “Who did you take after!” – 65.49%; PM11 “You don’t know what you want!” – 69.37% and PM35 “Don’t waste your time!” – 76.06% (advice mixed with reproach).

Conclusion: The first stage of the study shows that the majority of the messages given to the teenagers from their parents can be considered positive, either because of the direct positive meaning that they carry or because of the implicit positive attitude in the form of advice or reproach. The percentage of the Parental messages that have a directly negative meaning, offensive mean-

ing and even destructive meaning is low. Yet, even though the highly negative Parental messages were received only by 9% to 19% of the respondents in the study, there is a high probability that they will be permanently included in their Parent Ego State (first quantile). When a PM from the first quantile is combined with negative PM from the other quantiles, where the percentage of the respondents reporting them increases, although the relative strength of the negative impact decreases, they could still form a highly negative Parent Ego state and a corresponding negative attitude toward themselves and the others.

B) Second stage:

In addition to the PM questionnaire, 40 of the teenagers also filled the standard Buss-Durkee questionnaire for measuring aggression. Two groups of adolescents were formed: the first group includes adolescents with high scores on the overall aggression scale; the adolescents in the second group have indicators for low aggressiveness. Each group consists of 20 teenagers aged 15-18, a total of 13 girls and 27 boys. The following table (Table 2) shows the overall results from the aggression survey - it presents the data on the adolescents whose aggression was categorized as low and on the adolescents whose aggression proved to be high.

Table 2. Results from the Buss-Durkee inventory

	Assault	Verbal Hostility	Indirect Hostility	Negativ-ism	Irritabil-ity	Suspi-cion	Resent-ment	Mean value
Non-ag-gressive	35.3%	34.8%	51.65%	35%	40.95%	35.75%	20.03%	36.21%
Aggres-sive	71.5%	57.25%	60.9%	45%	54.9%	47.85%	47.3%	54.07%

Source: author

Table 2 shows that the average overall aggressiveness of the respondents from the non-violent group is 36.21%, while in the group of the aggressive teenagers it is 54.07%. The highest scores in the group of the aggressive teenagers are on the following scales: Assault - 71.5%, i.e. they often enter into physical confrontations and conflicts (opposed to only 35.3% in the non-aggressive group); Verbal hostility - 57.25% opposed to 34.8%, i.e. they offend their classmates and quarrel with them more often; Indirect hostility - 60.9% - i.e. they direct their anger to objects, they break them, throw them, etc. On the Indirect hostility scale, the results of the boys and girls in the non-aggressive group are relatively high too - 51.65%, and this can be explained by the general tendency of teenagers to use indirect aggressiveness as a way of reaction and protection. There is an extremely large difference in the results of the two groups on the Resentment scale - more than 20%. This shows extremely intense negative emotions in the psyche of the aggressive adolescents. Guilt is high in both groups - 41.95% in the non-aggressive group and 54.45% in the aggressive group. Although in the group of the aggressive adolescents it is more than 10% higher, the sense of guilt is not able to deter

the studied individuals from aggression, i.e. there are reasons to assume that this is a rather self-aggressive behaviour.

Once the aggression of the teenagers was measured and they were divided into two groups according to the degree of the aggressiveness, Hypothesis H_05 and Hypothesis H_06 were formulated:

A) Null hypothesis H_05 : There is no difference between the dominant PM in the two groups.

B) Null hypothesis H_06 : There is no difference between the Parental messages that came from the respondents' mothers and the Parental messages that came from the respondents' fathers in the two groups (aggressive and non-aggressive teenagers): $H_06: \mu = 0$.

A) In order to check H_05 , first we differentiated the PM according to the highest percentage of respondents that have heard them (over 50%), i.e. the dominant PM. This was done for both groups - with aggressive and non-aggressive teenagers.

In the group of the non-aggressive adolescents the following Parental messages are the dominant ones:

7. You are mum's/dad's clever boy/girl!
10. Fight for your rights!
12. You need to be bold in life!
25. Enjoy things as long as you can.
34. The most important thing is to have higher education.
35. Don't waste your time!
39. I can see something in you (something positive).
52. Can't you behave yourself!

All of these aforementioned PM are positive, with the exception of PM52, which, however, also contains a fundamentally socially positive message. The meaning of this message is that the person must comply with the generally accepted rules, must behave like all other people. The parents of the non-aggressive teenagers praise them, they feel happy for them, they advise them to be confident and to protect their rights, they value higher education, they value life not only in the direction of fulfilling one's duties but also in the direction of having enjoyable experiences. The following PM rank among the most common ones in adolescence: PM10 is the most common one - 85.56% of the teenagers report they have heard it; PM35 - 76.06%; PM25 - 66.2%; PM39 - 65.49%; PM34 - 64.79%; PM7 - 63.38%; PM12 - 51.76%; and PM52 - 42.25%. All of these messages are distributed in the fourth quantile, i.e. they are the most positive ones and also the ones that have been heard by the highest percentage of the adolescents, with the exception of the last two messages which are found in the third quantile, and they are also positive PM. This leads to the conclusion that the non-aggressive adolescents receive positive PM, which in turn may be one of the conditions for the low aggressiveness in the group.

In contrast, in the group of the aggressive adolescents the most dominant PM are the following:

3. You are not going to manage. Let me do it for you.

11. You don't know what you want.
14. You will never achieve anything!
22. Go outside to play – you gave me a headache.
27. You need to be insolent in life.
33. Look how well others cope compared to you!
48. If you behave like this, I will not love you anymore.
59. What a loser!

All of these PM express the parent's negative attitude to the teenagers, distrust in their strength, rejection, even a threat to deprive them of love! PM22, PM33 and PM27 are found relatively frequently in the main group of 284 respondents (in the third quantile), but PM59 is one of the rarest (found in only 9.51% of the respondents in the main group) and has a highly negative emotional meaning; the same applies to PM48 – it was found in only 16.55% of the respondents in the main group; PM14 – found in 23.4% of the respondents. In the general context of these Parental messages, even PM3, which is generally found in 60.21% of the respondents, sounds not as willingness to help but as a denial of the ability of the adolescent to deal with the problem or the situation on his/her own.

Table 3 shows the most dominant PM in the two groups:

Table 3. Dominant Parental Messages in Non-aggressive and Aggressive Teenagers

Group	Dominant Parental messages							
Non-aggressive	PM7	PM10	PM12	PM25	PM34	PM35	PM39	PM52
Aggressive	PM3	PM11	PM14	PM22	PM27	PM33	PM48	PM59

Source:author

None of the dominant PM are found in both groups.

This result allows us to reject the main hypothesis H_01 and to accept that the dominant Parental messages in the group of the aggressive adolescents are radically different from the dominant Parental messages in the group of the non-aggressive adolescents.

B) In order to test hypothesis H_06 which states "There is no difference between the Parental messages that came from the respondents' mothers and the Parental messages that came from the respondents' fathers in the two groups (aggressive and non-aggressive teenagers): $H_06: \mu = 0$." the data for the two groups obtained with the PM Questionnaire was processed separately. The differences between the PM given by the mothers and the PM given by the fathers were compared. Here we do not compare the dominant messages but all messages the teenagers have heard. Therefore, the latter will not coincide with the PM listed above in Table 3. In order to compare the messages given separately from the mothers or the fathers, the mean values, their standard deviations, and the t-values were computed. After that the t-statistics were computed. If the difference is positive, the respondents have heard the parental messages more often from their mothers. If it is negative, they have heard them more often from their fathers.

Results in the group of the non-aggressive adolescents. The critical value is 2.093, i.e., that is the values above 2.093 and below -2.093 are statistically significant.

The Parental messages that mothers give more often than the fathers are PM7, PM10, PM14, PM22, PM52, PM53 and PM58:

- 7. You are mum's/dad's clever boy/girl!
- 10. Fight for your rights!
- 14. You will never achieve anything!
- 22. Go outside to play - you gave me a headache.
- 52. Can't you behave yourself!
- 53. You don't know how to show consideration for others.
- 58. You don't know how to adjust!

The mothers more often than the fathers praise and encourage the respondents from the non-aggressive group, but they more often reproach them for behaviour that does not conform to the social norms. Also, they more often feel burdened by their children and more often fear about their future.

Results in the group of the aggressive adolescents. The critical value is the same - 2,093, because the number of the respondents is the same - 20. In this group there are both positive and negative statistically significant differences. The positive are in the case of PM31, PM35, PM46, PM49, PM52, PM58, i.e. the mothers say more often than the fathers:

- 31. You don't know where your interest lies.
- 35. Don't waste your time!
- 46. I should have never given birth to you!
- 49. You are definitely crazy.
- 52. Can't you behave yourself!
- 58. You don't know how to adjust!

Here, same as in the group of the non-aggressive adolescents, we see that the mothers fear more often than the fathers that their children do not know how to respect the social norms and fear their inability to cope with life. However, unlike the mothers of the non-aggressive respondents, the mothers of the aggressive respondents say to their children some extremely abrupt statements, such as PM49 You are definitely crazy, and the terrible PM46 I should have never given birth to you!. The big picture shows that the mothers express an extremely negative attitude toward their children, in which even the PM expressing concern about the social adaptation sound extremely negative and discouraging.

The negative differences show that the fathers say PM2 and PM41 more often than the mothers:

- 2. If they hit you - hit back!
- 41. Women are stupid.

Here we now find a direct message from the fathers that prompts aggressive behavior and an indirectly aggressive message about the other sex because if the father tells his son "Women are stupid", he undermines the authority of the boy's mother and at the same time belittles all women as a whole, and belittling is often the cause of aggression. If the father tells this PM to his daughter,

it is a negative statement about her herself, which is also extremely emotionally charged and can naturally lead to a tendency to aggressiveness, even if only to win her recognition and to protect herself. Or, if it does not lead to direct aggression, it may become a reason for the accumulation of a great amount of resentment, which may indirectly become a reason for aggression.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The dominant Parental messages in the group of the aggressive adolescents are radically different from the dominant Parental messages in the group of the non-aggressive adolescents.
2. In the group of the non-aggressive adolescents the dominant Parental messages are highly positive, whereas in the group of the aggressive teenagers the dominant PM are strongly negative.
3. In the group of the non-aggressive adolescents in most cases the mothers and the fathers give them the same messages, but the mothers more often than the fathers praise their children, they more often stimulate them to stand up for themselves, and at the same time they more often try to prompt a socially acceptable behaviour with a focus on consideration for others and complying with the social norms; they more often fear that their children will not succeed in life.
4. The aggressive boys and girls are given strong emotionally negatively charged messages from their mothers and fathers. Mothers mostly express dissatisfaction and disappointment with their children, culminating in such a negative statement as "I should have never given birth to you!", and such statements in all cases will deeply hurt the child and make him/her feel disliked, disapproved of, unwanted, rejected. Fathers, in turn, directly 'advise' their children to be aggressive - "If they hit you - hit back" - instead of advising the teenager to seek other, more constructive ways for resolving conflicts. Fathers also show indirect aggression toward the other sex, which the girls are likely to see as a direct insult, and the boys - as a reason for belittling (and perhaps aggression).

SUMMARY

The results obtained so far lead to the conclusion that the Parental messages the aggressive adolescents were given from their parents in childhood and continue to be given during adolescence take the form of the content of the Parent Ego state and in this case a Parent who is able to directly realise itself in aggressive behaviour because this is the behaviour which is 'allowed' by the parents (mainly by the fathers). Parents teach their children to be aggressive, though they are not likely to fully realise that. Corresponding to the parental messages recorded in the Parent Ego state are the multiple reactions in the Child Ego state. They are reactions to the abusive, humiliating and discouraging Paren-

tal messages given from both parents but mainly from the mothers, and they cause aggression in the form of aggressive reaction to the accumulated negative notions about one's self and the tension of experiencing them emotionally. This behaviour of the parents is one of the reasons for the problems with the aggressiveness of the teenagers in the Bulgarian schools. The years of socio-economic transition from socialist (command) economy to capitalist (market) economy have brought many positive changes as well as some negative. A large part of the modern Bulgarian parents who grew up in the complicated years of this transition feel confused about the adequate methods for coping with problems and either offer their children 'rules' for direct aggressive behaviour or attack them with emotional reactions which make teenagers prone to aggression as a way to reacting to the negative emotions.

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