

AGGRESSION IN ADOLESCENT DELINQUENTS*

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Introduction

BANDURA and Walters (1959) have carefully studied adolescent aggression. They tried to ascertain the relationship between early child training practices, family inter-relationships and aggression. Their method was primarily that of intensive interview with twenty-six aggressive boys and twenty-six matched controls; it was confined to boys of average or above average intelligence who came from intact homes and whose parents were in steady employment. These aggressive boys were obtained either through the probation service or through the child guidance service; and their controls were selected from "High School" boys. Their findings, though interesting and important, are based on a study of a highly selected group of boys. There is as yet no definitive study and the phenomenon of adolescent aggression needs to be looked at carefully in different populations with appropriate controls.

A recent survey of 234 delinquent boys on psychiatric remand provided an opportunity for such a study. Those boys manifesting a pathological degree of aggressiveness were singled out for study and were compared with boys who did not manifest this type of behaviour. For these purposes an operational categorisation was evolved which is mainly descriptive in nature. It resulted in a division of the aggressive boys into five groups.

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1. *Assertive or thug-like hostility.* This group includes those boys who wander around in a group in a desultory fashion, not quite aimlessly because they always have a sense of expectation of trouble; they seem to obtain a kind of satisfaction and enjoyment from their hostility and aggressive episodes, but usually exercise this hostility mainly as a part of a group phenomenon. In the presence of authority they have a degree of control over their aggressiveness, but once initiated this control is only relative. Some might even consider this hostility in lesser degrees to be a healthy or relatively normal phenomenon in the group or gang delinquent and only consider it pathological when the youth becomes explosively violent or unpredictably aggressive.
2. *Catastrophic, impulsive aggressiveness.* This boy has sudden, catastrophic outbursts of aggressiveness which apparently must, almost inexorably, run their course, and at the end of which the boy again gains control. He mostly has adequate control of his tempers and outbursts but every now and then unpredictably lashes out violently; and later expresses remorse, saying that he did not mean any harm.
3. *Paranoid aggressiveness.* This is the continuously unapproachably hostile youth. The aggressive components of his interpersonal relationships are precariously balanced on a high wire. His outbursts are frequent and mostly predictable as they seem to be triggered by seemingly trivial or innocuous frustrations. He variously differs from the catastrophically impulsive aggressive youth in that the latter is not continuously unapproachably hostile, is more likely to express remorse and less likely to consider his violence justified.
4. *Severe cruelty.* This is the type of boy who shows a seriously cold and sadistic streak which expresses itself in the form of cruelty either to children or to animals.
5. *Family-directed aggressiveness.* Here the serious aggressiveness manifests itself only within the family and is directed at other members of the family.

Inevitably there was some overlap and so the boys were allocated to these groups according to the main pattern of aggressive behaviour which they displayed. The only aggressive group with reasonably large numbers was the "assertive or thug-like group." Therefore, for

statistical purposes it was decided to lump the other four aggressive groups together—this resulted in three main groups of boys:

- (a) The non-hostile, non-aggressive delinquent.
- (b) The assertive, hostile delinquent.
- (c) The non-assertive, hostile delinquent.

Illustrative Case Histories

1. Assertive or thug-like hostility

Arthur aged 15

Offences. He had previously committed a series of offences which included malicious damage, petty larceny, discharging a firearm in a highway, and indecent telephone calls. The present charge was that of assault occasioning actual bodily harm on a young woman.

Psychological testing. Full scale I.Q. 85 (W.I.S.C.); reading age (Schonell) 4 years retarded; during testing the psychologist reported that "he had a decidedly hostile manner, though actually co-operated quite well in the test."

Social history. Although there had been a number of mother figures in the background, Arthur had always lived with his father. The very early rearing was undertaken, until she deserted, by his natural mother; then the major part of the rearing was undertaken by the paternal grandmother—this extended until he was in his teens; finally, by the step-mother and his own father. Arthur had remained close to his grandmother, and had visited her regularly; she had, to all intents and purposes, been the one stable and continuous mother-surrogate in his background. She asserted that since the boy left her care he had never had much of a home life, with neither parent seeming to bother where he went or what he did; that the boy was fond of his father, but that the step-mother had been for a time jealous of her husband's affection for the boy. The step-mother, in turn, complained that Arthur had stolen small sums from her purse over a long period, but her husband would not accept that the boy was stealing at all. Arthur's father was described by all (including the probation officer) as a pleasant, easy-going man who had not attempted to impose any discipline on the boy—"he appears to be a kindly man, who is fond of his wife and children." The step-mother was described as a slovenly woman and a poor housekeeper who showed preference for her own children. The probation officer stated that, in spite of this, there was a certain amount of affection in the home and it was his impression that the step-mother's earlier resentment was not deep-rooted and that she was fond of the boy.

It was not easy to reconcile the various views, but at least they suggested that there was not complete and outright rejection of Arthur by his step-mother. Arthur spent his evenings with friends who collectively and persistently made nuisances of themselves and were frequently in trouble. They would wander around bumptiously and pugnaciously bumping into strangers, shouldering them out of the way and spoiling for a fight with little if any

provocation. His headmaster described him as a very untidy boy, whose behaviour in class was satisfactory but who tended to be aggressive outside the classroom. His school work and his attitude to it were poor.

The remand home. It was reported that Arthur responded to strict discipline but would take advantage of lack of supervision; he tolerated authority and was mostly a polite, approachable and co-operative boy; he mixed well with other boys of his own age group but was attracted to trouble; he was prone to moods; he showed no sense of guilt.

Psychiatric interview. He proved to be a well-built, approachable youth who talked freely about himself and his family. He openly admitted that initially he could not get on with his step-mother, but now did not bear her a grudge nor was he antipathetically disposed to her. All of his offences were committed while in the company of other boys—they were not only acts of bravado, as he also seemed to derive considerable pleasure from them. He appreciated the seriousness of his offences but seemed unconcerned about the consequence of it. His main ambition was to own a motor-bike and this was the main theme of most of his dreams. There was no evidence of any undue anxiety, phobias or any other unusual symptomatology. In view of the nature and persistence of his offences, it was thought that he was heading for an aggressive type of psychopathy.

2. Catastrophic impulsive aggressiveness

Cyril aged 15

Offences. Over four years had committed a large series of larceny offences.

Psychological examination. This was confounded by the boy being depressed and the psychologist suggested that the I.Q. in the 60s was an underestimate of the boy's true potential. The school (Secondary Modern) described him as being friendly and anxious to please; his ability average and his educational attainments fair; his attendance was regular and his conduct was good.

Social and family history. The father died in an accident when Cyril was eight. But even before then his mother had found the handling of her large brood a strain—and added to this was the care and concern of her husband, who was a life-long epileptic. In the early years of life Cyril was found to have a tuberculous condition and was hospitalised for some years. During this period the family visiting was irregular. Then he returned home some little while after his father's death, but his bereaved mother was not in a fit state to give him the support he needed. He was soon referred to a child guidance clinic because of problematic behaviour and wandering. There he was considered insecure and was described as a timid, inhibited, disturbed boy. His mother attributed his poor educational progress to the fact that he started school some three years after the other children. At thirteen he began to keep "bad company." She also described how over the previous few years Cyril started to take "funny turns" which were unlike those of her husband. She described one episode when he was woken up late for work and went berserk, upsetting his room and throwing furniture around.

The remand home. Staff reported that he responded well to a kindly, relaxed discipline; would not take advantage of lack of supervision; was polite and well mannered except when in a mood, as when on one occasion he flew into a temper and threatened one of the staff with a brush. He tended to be a poor mixer, was solitary and mostly shunned by the other boys. He would try to avoid trouble, and would tend to seek his companions from among the younger boys. He worked best when alone.

Psychiatric examination. He was found to be seriously depressed, and it was thought that this was reactive to his present circumstances. He admitted wetting the bed occasionally. He had a major antipathy for life in a small town. He professed an interest in cricket, football and cadets. He described how something would set him off into a mood and a violent temper which, at the time, he could not control, but afterwards he always felt rather upset by his outbursts. He also had many feelings of inferiority and a definite sensitive streak. In view of the family history of epilepsy and the periodicity of his violent episodes an epileptic condition was postulated. Careful electroencephalographic recordings did not support this hypothesis.

3. Paranoid aggressiveness

Percival aged 15

Offences. A long series of previous offences which included larceny, violence and being beyond control. Presently charged with stealing and driving away a motor-car.

Psychological testing. W.I.S.C. full scale I.Q. of 107.

Social and family history. The early home life was both extremely disharmonious and unsettled. The father was frequently out of work and there were many economic difficulties. At times the father would work away from home, and on one occasion, when the boy was nine, he did not see his father for some nine months; later on the father had a prolonged stint on night-shift. At the age of eleven the boy had already committed a series of breaking and entering offences; these were considered to be an expression of emotional disorder and he was referred to a child guidance clinic. His response, in the main, was poor, with the boy persistently truanting, and eventually at the age of thirteen he was deemed beyond control, and admitted to a children's home. He was later admitted to hospital with a knife wound of the abdomen, which he admitted to contriving in order to effect a discharge. On two separate subsequent occasions he was again deemed beyond control, but no one could get him to the remand home because of his unusual strength and violent tempers. The Children's Officer described him as a "high-spirited boy who tended to be out of touch with reality." Over the years he had been under the supervision of various social workers but none of them could make any real contact with him.

School report. He frequently played truant; was not interested in learning; his behaviour out of the class was most unsatisfactory and he was dishonest and untruthful. After leaving school he had five jobs in six months.

The remand home. The staff asserted that he was attracted to trouble. Previously they were unable to cope with his tempers, but on this admission they did not have so much difficulty. He absconded on the first day of remand, took a car, and proceeded on a joy-ride.

Psychiatric interview. He exuded hostility and proved to be verbally aggressive—he could be described as a “chip on the shoulder type.” It was a major operation keeping him from exploding during the course of the interview. He gave the impression that the most innocuous comment or question could be enough to precipitate an outburst of violence. If he was left alone to do exactly what he pleased there was no trouble, but any attempts to make contact with him were to him tantamount to being pounced on and attacked. He was completely antagonistic to authority. He was ambivalent about his home; while away he would make desperate efforts to return there but once back home made little contact with his parents.

He was a boy who had been given the utmost assistance from all agencies but had responded extremely poorly to these endeavours; he had never really co-operated, and seemed quite undesirous of being helped. His destructive impulses were always quite near the surface, and could easily be directed at either his environment or himself. The consensus of opinion was that he was a crudely paranoid pre-psychopathic type of individual who was completely antagonistic to authority or authority figures.

4. Severe cruelty

Carl aged 15

Offences. These consisted, in the main, of taking and driving away motor-cars.

Psychological examination. On the W.I.S.C. he had a full scale I.Q. of 117.

School report. Considered below average ability in attainments; attendance irregular; was obedient only when under supervision; considered untrustworthy and untruthful; described as a bully and coward, spiteful to small children, hurting them without cause; on one occasion punched a young boy rather violently around the head and ears, knowing full well that the boy had a painful ear condition.

Social and family history. His mother left home when he was 14. She was reported as having little affection for her children, had an affair and eventually deserted to cohabit with someone else. Thereafter the home was described as being clean and comfortable, with the father a good provider but playing little part in the supervision of his son's activities. In his early years Carl suffered from nightmares; he was later described as being a suspicious boy with a sensitive nature, being frequently teased at school and reacting strongly to this. At the time of remand his father described Carl as an energetic boy keen on physical activity, but not enthusiastic about organised social activities such as clubs and scouts etc. He also said that Carl had, throughout his life, been intermittently enuretic and encopretic.

Psychiatric examination. He proved to be a tall, well-built young man with nails bitten to the quick. He was offhand and semi-truculent in manner.

He described himself as having a huge appetite. His hobby was stealing and dumping motor-cycles. He spoke freely about his extremely poor relationships with his siblings, who were irritated and annoyed by his anti-social activities. He showed no remorse nor had he any fears of being sent to an institution. He had no ambition, and since leaving school had frequent changes of jobs. He also described with relish his sadistic onslaughts on others.

Remand reports. These are particularly illuminating with the boy being described as a nuisance, mostly co-operative if supervised, but if not he would take advantage. Some time later, on a second period of remand, he was described as being aggressive and sadistic, joining in trouble, but generally shunned by other boys; all the boys were frightened of him because of his size and strength, which he used to intimidate them; he showed a complete disregard for the feelings of others.

5. Family directed aggressiveness

Ian aged 14

Offence. Stealing a large sum of money from his father.

Psychological examination. He obtained a verbal I.Q. of 74, performance I.Q. of 109 and a full scale I.Q. of 89 (W.I.S.C.).

School reports. Attainments poor; some truanting, but not excessive; said to need firm handling and strict supervision in class.

Social history. The father was described as stable, straightforward and honest; had a good work record; from birth had a major physical disability which seriously impeded his mobility. Prior to his wife's death he devoted all his energies to his work, and left the care of the children to her. When Ian was eight his mother died, and at this time the Children's Department reported that he undoubtedly missed his mother badly. Ian became so difficult that the help of the Children's Department was enlisted and Ian was admitted to a children's home; his model behaviour there led to an early return home.

The burden of looking after the home thereafter fell on the father who, though his intentions were good, could not translate these intentions into effective action. The home background was described as follows: poorly furnished; very untidy; some amount of neglect due to the mother's absence and the father's physical disability; his father could not adequately supervise or control the boy who divided his time between roaming with a gang of youths and going about in the company of a man of dubious character some ten years older than himself. Even though he roamed with this gang there was no evidence of his indulging in serious mischief outside the home. Within it his behaviour was described as reprehensible; this was especially so when his father was absent, when he would use foul language and be extremely spiteful and viciously aggressive to his younger sister. On occasions he was even hostile to his father, whose only method of coping with him was by deprivation of privileges. The charging of the boy with theft was said to be the final gesture of a desperate father.

The remand home. He was described as a quiet boy who tended not to show his feelings; he accepted authority and would not take advantage of

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lack of supervision; was well-mannered and respectful and avoided trouble; in the main he was a friendly and quiet boy.

Psychiatric examination. Confirmed the picture painted by the remand home staff. A significant amount of sibling rivalry was elicited. The only anxieties which could be discovered were in relation to his poor progress at school. It was felt that the boy's earlier difficult behaviour was related to adverse antecedent experiences, namely, the bereavement, the various moves, privations, general unsettlement and insecurity of his home life.

Findings

There were no differences between the three main groups in respect of the following features: social class distribution, ordinal position, overcrowding within the home, truancy and school progress.

Frequency

Of the 234 boys, 158 were assessed as being non-hostile or non-aggressive, 7 were categorised as catastrophically impulsive, 9 as showing the paranoid type of hostility; 44 as showing the assertive type of hostility; 5 as showing family-directed aggressiveness; and 11 severe cruelty. All in all, 76 boys exhibited one or other kind of hostility or aggressiveness. The frequency (approximately 33 per cent.) is, indeed, rather high; and a possible explanation is that the courts were inclined to filter boys with inexplicable hostility through to the psychiatrist.

Age and hostility

TABLE I

Age and Hostility				
Age	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total % Hostile
13. years and under	66	8	9	83 20.5%
14. years	49	9	8	66 25.5%
15 years and over	43	27	15	85 49%

The above figures suggest that hostility and aggressiveness are in part a function of age; the frequency of non-hostility decreases with age and, conversely, the frequency of hostility increases with age.

Social, Environmental and family background factors

(a) Living with parents

TABLE II

Living with Parents				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Living with both parents	109	32	15	156
Living away from parents	49	12	17	78

TABLE III

Living with Mother				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Living with mother or both parents	140	38	20	198
Away from mother	18	6	12	36

A significant number of the non-assertives in comparison with the non-hostiles ($\text{Chi}^2 = 6.63$ for one degree of freedom) and the assertive hostiles ($\text{Chi}^2 = 4.21$ for one degree of freedom) were living away from their parents at the time of remand. Table III just emphasises the latter with respect to the mother ($\text{Chi}^2 = 17.8$ and 4.59 respectively). The distribution of the assertive hostiles, on the other hand, does not depart significantly from the distributions of the non-hostiles. When, however, overall prolonged separation was

considered it was found that, in those cases in which an adequate early history was available, neither hostile group had suffered more prolonged separation in the past from one or both parents than either the non-hostile group or each other.

(b) *Special patterns*

In the subgroups some important patterns were noted: of the fourteen children with stepfathers, six were assessed as being significantly hostile and of these five manifested severe cruelty. Elsewhere, one of the authors (Kolvin, 1965) has suggested that the stepfather may produce more problems for the pre-delinquent child than he solves. Eight of the eleven cruel delinquents were living away from one or both parents; and of the 156 delinquents living with both parents only three manifested serious cruelty. In addition, three of the five children with family-directed aggressiveness were living away from either their mother or father.

(c) *Main rearing patterns*

TABLE IV

Main Rearing Patterns				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
"Omission"	73	25	6	104
"Commission"	77	18	25	120

An attempt was made to categorise the boys according to the parental pattern of rearing and their social environment. In the field of delinquency there has, in this context, been one outstanding systematic scientific classification—that of Hewitt and Jenkins. This classification was later modified by Hilda Lewis for use in her study of *Deprived Children*. A slightly modified form of the latter was adopted for this study. As this work is so well known only a brief description follows.

Hewitt and Jenkins examined 500 case records of problem children referred to the Michigan Child Guidance Clinic. Multiple correlation statistical analysis revealed three social and behavioural patterns:

- (a) "Parental negligence and exposure to bad company."
- (b) "Parental rejection"—basically lack of parental affection.
- (c) "Parental repression"—basically harsh and repressive upbringing.

In her study Lewis decided that the Hewitt and Jenkins classification had a much more objective basis than the others and so adapted it without serious modification for the purposes of her enquiry. For this present study Lewis's adaptation of the Hewitt and Jenkins classification has been mostly followed. Some minor modifications of Lewis's adaptation were considered appropriate to the needs of the study. Further information about the precise definitions of the categories used can be obtained from one of the authors (I. K.).

Out of Lewis's modification of the Hewitt and Jenkins rearing patterns two fundamental social situational patterns were conceptualised. The first can be designated as an "omission" pattern—where nothing actively is done to the child but he experiences a "neglectful" environment and is "exposed" to the contagion of delinquency; the second designated as a "commission" pattern. As the commission pattern the child experiences an actively pathogenic environment in terms of "rejection" or "repression" or both. In the Lewis study, it was found that it was possible to make a broad and generally satisfactory classification after going into each case fully.

Using the above classification it was found that a significantly higher number of the non-assertive hostiles had been exposed to a "commission" pattern (for the non-hostiles $\chi^2 = 7.82$ for one degree of freedom and for the assertives 9.595 for one degree of freedom). In addition a greater percentage of the assertive hostiles had been exposed to the "omission" pattern than the group of non-assertive hostile delinquents; but the distribution of the assertive hostiles did not significantly depart from the distribution of non-hostiles who experienced this pattern. It must be emphasised that there are no significant differences in the patterns of upbringing between the assertive hostile group and the non-hostile group.

In addition, all of the eleven boys categorised as cruel had experienced a "commission" pattern of upbringing.

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(d) Family size

TABLE V

Family Size			
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile
Large families	19 (12%)	8 (18%)	2 (6%)

Family size does not appear to be significantly related to aggressiveness in delinquents.

(e) Delinquent siblings

TABLE VI

Delinquent Siblings				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Older delinquent siblings	39	15	7	61
No older delinquent siblings	119	29	25	173

(f) Stable siblings

TABLE VII

Stable Siblings				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Known stable siblings	115	34	23	172
Known unstable siblings	31 (21%)	4 (10%)	9 (27%)	44

The assertive hostiles had a larger proportion of older delinquent siblings than either the non-hostiles or the non-assertive hostiles, but this does not reach statistical significance. In addition, the non-assertive hostiles had the highest proportion of unstable siblings, but again this is not statistically significant.

The boys, their offences, their behaviour and symptoms

128 boys completed the M.P.I. There were no significant deviations on the neuroticism scale, but on the extraversion scale 30 out of 43 hostiles scored above the mean on extraversion, whereas 45 of the 88 non-hostiles scored above average on the extraversion scale (70 per cent. and 53 per cent. respectively— $\text{Chi}^2 = \text{N.S.}$).

TABLE VIII

Psychosomatic Symptoms				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Psychosomatic symptoms	106 (72%)	23 (55%)	23 (72%)	152
Nil	46 (28%)	20 (45%)	9 (28%)	75

Though the assertives exhibited a lesser percentage of psychosomatic symptoms than the other two groups this did not reach statistical significance. In addition, 27 per cent. of the total hostile group had not masturbated or participated in other homo- or heterosexual activity, while 40 per cent. of the non-hostile group had not—again this does not reach statistical significance.

TABLE IX

Group Offences				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Offences always alone	65	15	19	99
Offences generally in company	91	28	13	132

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TABLE X

Breach Offences				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Breach offences	83 (52%)	16 (37%)	21 (66%)	120
Active offences	75 (48%)	28 (63%)	11 (34%)	114

TABLE XI

Stealing				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Stealing	130 (82%)	28 (63%)	21 (67%)	179
Non-stealing	28 (18%)	16 (37%)	11 (33%)	55

An analysis of the offences revealed a number of significant differences. First, when the boys were divided into two categories depending on whether they committed their crimes with a group of other boys or always committed them in solitude, it was found that the non-assertive hostility pattern tends not to be a group or gang phenomenon (χ^2 for assertive hostility versus non-assertive hostility = 3.507 which approaches the 5 per cent. level of significance). Secondly, when the offences for which the boys are on remand are divided into those which could be considered "breach" offences, which consist of breach of probation, educational act offences (for instance not attending school etc.), and those in which the boys actively commit an offence (for instance larceny, malicious damage etc.), it is found that the assertively hostile delinquent commits mainly "active" offences while the non-assertive hostile commits mainly "breach" offences (χ^2 for assertive hostility versus non-assertive hostility = 5.232 for one degree of freedom). This merely underlines the fact that the assertive hostile delinquent boy's antisocial behaviour is a positive exhibition of prestige-seeking self-assertion whereas the non-assertive hostile's behaviour frequently manifests itself indirectly as a form of negativism. Thirdly, if the offences are dichotomised,

depending on whether the delinquent had committed a larceny or non-larceny offence, it was found that a higher percentage of the hostiles had committed non-stealing offences (non-hostiles versus assertive hostiles— $\text{Chi}^2 = 4.943$ for one degree of freedom and non-hostiles versus non-assertives— $\text{Chi}^2 = 4.6$ for one degree of freedom).

Social isolation

TABLE XII

Isolation				
	Non-hostile	Assertive hostile	Non-assertive hostile	Total
Isolated lads	33 (22%)	12 (28%)	18 (55%)	63
Non-isolated lads	125	32	14	171

Isolation was assessed according to a number of criteria—first, by the boy's account of themselves; secondly, from the remand home staff's report; thirdly, from the probation reports, and, finally, from the psychiatric interview. The boys were assigned to one of the two categories, as being either socially isolated or non-isolated on the basis of the above evidence. It will be seen that again the assertive hostile's distribution does not differ very much from the non-hostile's; and the non-assertive's distribution shows a major deviation from both the non-hostile's and the assertive hostile's distribution (assertive hostile versus non-assertive hostile— $\text{Chi}^2 = 6.25$ for one degree of freedom).

Brain damage and electroencephalography

Because of a number of hypotheses about the association between brain damage and psychiatric disorder we took careful histories, albeit retrospective, and in addition compared the three groups electroencephalographically. A surprisingly small number of the hostiles had a suggestive history of previous head injury or brain damage. The exception was the impulsively hostile group where six of the seven had a suggestive history, but only 15 per cent. of the rest of the hostile group had a suggestive history. Electroencephalographically, we discerned some trends but these, when carefully analysed

statistically, proved non-significant. In fact, the major finding was a complete lack of correlation between an earlier suggestive history of brain damage, E.E.G. variable and aggressiveness in a delinquent population.

It must be noted that the mainly negative findings of the E.E.G. were based on a comparison between two delinquent groups. It is not possible to say whether significant differences would have arisen if a non-delinquent group had also been studied.

Psychiatric examination of the five main types

Two of the eleven seriously cruel children were considered to be concealed serious neurotics, four were severely damaged personalities and one was a borderline defective.

One of the seven impulsive children was diagnosed as a florid hysteric and two as severely damaged personalities. In this group clinically, almost without exception, the suspicion of brain damage was present.

The paranoid group was the most seriously disturbed—seven out of the nine were considered to be either severely damaged personalities or crude and primitive types of pre-psychopathic boys.

Four of the five boys who manifested family-directed aggression were considered maladjusted but none of them was thought to be a severely damaged personality.

Only five of the forty-four assertively hostile delinquents were considered to be severely damaged personalities, another two were labelled as being crude and primitive pre-psychopathic types and two were borderline defectives.

The mental state of the boys can be differently described—eighteen (41 per cent.) of the forty-four assertively hostile delinquents were assessed as not being seriously emotionally disturbed, while only six (18 per cent.) of the non-assertive hostiles were not seriously emotionally disturbed.

Comment and discussion

The Bandura and Walters study delineated numerous significant differences between their two matched groups; these included the father being typically hostile and rejecting towards his son, with the mother displaying inconsistent handling of certain situations. The authors go on to propose that these environmental influences produce

a type of dependency conflict which generalises to other authority figures and thereby reduces the effectiveness of authority figures as possible socialising agents. They also assert that the defiance and resistance are reinforced by the absence of consistent socialisation demands by parents and a failure of the parents to follow through on demands that they previously made. In addition, the father presented a hostile and aggressive model for emulation.

In the present study the authors obtained their aggressive and non-aggressive groups from a delinquent population; they concentrated on broad family-rearing patterns; they evolved an operational categorisation—and this different approach and categorisation brought to light other adverse environmental influences which were associated with the two main categories of aggressive behaviour in adolescent delinquents. This fact that different factors and combinations of factors were significantly associated with different types of aggressiveness is of crucial importance.

It would, therefore, appear that the breakdown of the aggressive and hostile group into two broad subgroups, the assertive hostiles and the non-assertive hostiles, has some validity. There were many differences between the boys in these groups in terms of their behaviour, their emotional status and their family and social backgrounds. The most significant finding was the number of similarities between the non-hostile group of boys and the assertively hostile group. This suggests to the authors that the phenomenon of assertive hostility may just be a "*forme fruste*" of subcultural delinquency which increasingly reveals itself with age. The broad group of non-assertive aggressiveness and hostility is not a clearly defined homogeneous group and may consist of a number of subgroups as already indicated in this study. Nevertheless, the many differences between the non-assertively hostile group, the assertively hostile and the non-hostile tend to suggest that the first is fundamentally different from the latter two groups. The boys in this non-assertive group are more psychologically disturbed and in their formative years have been unusually exposed to excesses of environmental and family pathology. In the light of the above the authors offer the following hypotheses:

- (i) that aggressiveness in delinquent adolescents is not a homogeneous phenomenon;
- (ii) that there is a group of aggressive delinquents whose behaviour appears to be just one kind of expression of the broad phenomenon of subcultural delinquency;

- (iii) that this aggressiveness and hostility in delinquents seem to have multiple determinants. Further research will most likely lead to discoveries of combinations of antecedents including sociocultural, psychopathological and biological origins.

There is a high percentage of socially isolated youths in the non-assertive group. This replicates the finding of a previous study (Kolvin, 1965) that there was a major group of socially isolated boys who were both aggressive and maladjusted. It has often been pointed out that the unpredictable, dangerous personalities who are, in addition, mentally under suspicion tend to be rejected and excluded even in a delinquent subculture.

Summary

1. 76 boys (33 per cent.) out of 234 boys on psychiatric remand were adjudged to be manifesting a pathological degree of aggressiveness. This is indeed a high percentage and a possible explanation is that the courts were inclined to filter boys with inexplicable hostility through to the psychiatrist.

2. Serious aggressiveness and hostility in adolescents appear to be an age-related symptom.

3. An operational categorisation was evolved with the hostile boys being placed in five different categories: assertive or thug-like hostility; catastrophic impulsive aggressiveness; paranoid aggressiveness; severe cruelty; and family-directed aggressiveness.

4. Only the assertively hostile delinquent group proved to have reasonable numbers and for statistical purposes the other four aggressive groups were combined. This resulted in three main groups of boys:

- (a) the non-hostile, non-aggressive delinquent;
- (b) the assertive, hostile delinquent;
- (c) the non-assertive, hostile delinquent.

5. The salient differences were:

- (a) A significant number of the non-assertive hostile boys had experienced a combination of "rejection and repression" (following Lewis's modification of the Hewitt and Jenkins classification) in their earlier and later formative years. In addition, all of the delinquents manifesting severe cruelty had experienced this so-called "commission"

pattern which is a combination of "rejection and repression."

- (b) A noticeable trend was that the non-assertive hostiles tended to commit their offences in solitude and not in the company of a gang of other boys.
- (c) A trend for the hostiles as a group to commit more non-larceny offences, the assertive hostiles to commit significantly more "active" offences and the non-assertive hostiles to commit significantly more "breach" offences.
- (d) A significantly high percentage of the non-assertive hostiles proved to be socially isolated lads.
- (e) A significant percentage of the non-assertive hostile boys were assessed as being seriously psychiatrically disturbed—only six out of thirty-two were not assessed as such. On the other hand, only twenty-six out of the forty-four assertive hostiles were assessed as manifesting a serious degree of psychiatric disorder.
- (f) In six out of seven of the impulsively hostile group there were suggestive hints of the possibility of brain damage at an earlier stage. Other than this, there were no significant findings in either the history or the E.E.G.

6. On the basis of the above findings the authors go on to suggest that the breakdown of the hostiles into assertive hostiles and non-assertive hostiles has some validity, and that assertive hostility may be a "*forme fruste*" of the general phenomenon of subcultural delinquency. Furthermore, they hypothesize that aggressiveness in adolescent delinquents will both not prove to be a homogeneous phenomenon and will have multifactorial antecedents.

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