REACTIVE AND PROACTIVE AGGRESSION AND ITS JUSTIFICATION IN INMATES

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OUTLINE

✓ Background
✓ Aim of the study
✓ Methods
✓ Results
✓ Conclusions
✓ Limitations and Perspectives
MEANING OF AGGRESSION?
INMATES
"REACTIVE AGGRESSION"
“PROACTIVE AGGRESSION”
Dodge (1991) propounded two kinds of aggressive behaviors:

1. **Reactive aggression**: produced as a response to a provocation very sensible to all kinds of stimuli (f.ins. offenses to self-esteem) they react with anger in a disproportionate and out of control way, rather than starting an aggressive act

2. **Proactive aggression**
Dodge (1991) propounded two kinds of aggressive behaviors:

1. **Reactive aggression**: produced as a response to a provocation

2. **Proactive aggression**: instrumental purpose
   - obtaining some goal, profit, or any other good
     - (f.ins. domination)
   - lack of any affective manifestation

- it's common finding both kinds of aggression in the same person: around 53% of children who engage in some form of aggressive behavior are both proactively and reactively aggressive (Dodge et al., 1997)
PROACTIVE/REACTIVE AGGRESSION

General population:

- proactive aggression is associated with antisocial outcomes in adulthood (criminal behavior, smoking and drinking)
  - whereas reactive aggression is not associated (Pulkkinen, 1987, 1996)
- boys: proactive aggression predicted delinquency-related violence, whereas reactive aggression predicted later dating violence (Brendgen et al., 2001)

Delinquents:

- proactive aggression is associated with delinquency in children (Fite et al., 2008)
- adolescent delinquents
  - differed from non-delinquents on their levels of proactive aggression, but not on reactive one
  - are more reactively aggressive than higher educated peers, but no more than lower educated peers (Coralijn et al., 2005)
- girls under arrest:
  - proactive aggression is associated with callous–unemotional traits and biased outcome expectations for aggression, whereas reactive aggression is associated with poorly regulated emotion and anger to perceived provocation (Marsee et al., 2007)

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JUSTIFICATION OF INTERPERSONAL AGGRESSION

General population:
- similar but not identical justification in all populations.
- mild aggression was more acceptable than stronger aggressive acts

Prisoners:
- the degree of hedonicity was higher in the inmates
- the higher intensity of aggression, the more pleasurable to the aggressor, but only within certain limits (no for too severe acts)
  (Cabanac et al., 2008; Martin Ramirez et al., 2009)
- slightly higher physical aggression among women than among men
  (Ireland, 2000)

Young delinquents:
- higher justification of aggression, preferably of its more severe forms, in practically all situations
  (Millana et al., 2010)
HYPOTHESIS

- higher proactive/reactive aggressive in inmates
- higher justification of aggression than in inmates
- the more violent behavior, the higher justification,
  except for extremely severe acts.
## SUBJECTS

**INMATES**  
a socially maladjusted population  
N = 371

**CONTROLS**  
a socially adjusted population  
N = 261

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>336</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age range</strong></td>
<td>15 to 56 yrs.</td>
<td>15 to 58 yrs.</td>
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<td><strong>Mean age (SD)</strong></td>
<td>26.59 yrs. (11.03)</td>
<td>24.05 yrs. (8.76)</td>
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CAMA (Moral Attitude on Aggression Questionnaire)
Ramírez (1986)

RPQ (Reactive Proactive Aggression Questionnaire)
Raine et al. (2006)
RESULTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RPQ-PA</th>
<th>RPQ-RA</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTAL</th>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
<th>RPQ</th>
<th>CAMA</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>RPQ-RA</td>
<td>.702**</td>
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<td>.494**</td>
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<td>.416**</td>
<td>.697**</td>
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<td>RPQ</td>
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<td>.911**</td>
<td>.463**</td>
<td>.426**</td>
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<td>CAMA</td>
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<td>.497**</td>
<td>.925**</td>
<td>.917**</td>
<td>.487**</td>
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</table>

**P<0.001
CORRELATIONSHIP RPQ vs CAMA

✓ a positive lineal correlation between aggressivity and justification of aggression R=.49

✓ justification of aggression has a higher correlation with the reactive dimension than with the proactive one
PROACTIVE/REACTIVE AGGRESSION IN INMATES

Main effect: F (1.625) = 65.056 (p < 0.001)
Interaction effect: F(1,625) =  29.997 (p<0.001)

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Aggression level was higher in inmates in the control group for both dimensions: proactive and reactive \[ F(1,625)=65.056(p<0.001) \]

This gap was higher for proactive aggression than for reactive one \[ F(1,625) = 29.997 (p<0.001) \]
INSTRUMENTAL/EMOTIONAL JUSTIFICATION OF AGGRESSION
MORAL JUSTIFICATION OF AGGRESSION by sexes

Male inmates vs. Male controls

Female inmate vs. Female controls

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MORAL JUSTIFICATION OF AGGRESSION

✓ overall: higher in inmates than in controls

✓ analyzing the kind of motivation:

- instrumental aggression was more justified than emotional aggression in both populations

- emotional aggression was more justified by inmates than by their control counterparts

- between both populations: no significant difference in the justification of instrumental aggression, overall

- Males: higher justification of emotional aggression in inmates, whereas higher justification of instrumental aggression in controls

- Females: both emotional and instrumental motivations for aggression were more acceptable in inmates than in controls, as well as than in both male populations
JUSTIFICATION OF AGGRESSION
best predictors

Model Summary

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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
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<td>2</td>
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a. Predictor variables: (Constant), RPQ_AR
b. Predictor variables: (Constant), RPQ_AR, POPULATION
c. Predictor variables: (Constant), RPQ_AR, POPULATION, RPQ_AP
d. Dependent variable: CAMA

Coefficients a

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>.388</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>3.785</td>
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*Dependent variable: CAMA
* p<0.001

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REACTIVE/PROACTIVE AGGRESSION AND ITS MORAL JUSTIFICATION
FACTORS LEADING TO PREDICTIONS

✓ a regression analysis showed that the justification could be predicted by the following factors:

- level of aggressivity (measured by RPQ)
- population (being imprisoned or not)

✓ but not by the sex and age of the subjects
   (this is not significant)

✓ range of explicative variables of justification of aggression:

   1st    RPQ-RA
   2nd    population
   3rd    RPQ-PA
CONCLUSIONS

1. Positive correlation between level of aggression and its moral justification:
   - the level of aggression was higher in inmates
   - the level of justification of aggression was higher in inmates

2. The justification of the aggression may be predicted by the following factors:
   - level of aggressivity (measured by the RPQ)
   - kind of population (being inmate or control group)
   - but not by sex or age (this is not significant)

3. Range of explicative variables of a justification:

   \[ \text{RPQ-RA} > \text{population} > \text{RPQ-PA} \]
1. Limitations:
   1. small sample
   2. heterogeneous age range
   3. heterogeneous sex range

2. Perspectives:
   - link with the personal history of each subject
Para ver esta película, debe disponer de QuickTime™ y de un descompresor.
thank you for your attention

and special thanks to all students who have supported us in the data collection
Thoughts much appreciate!

WORK AHEAD

- <aggressionresearch@med.ucm.es>