

Evolution and Deviant Behavior in Humans

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Deviant behavior, although ambiguously commented [1] and defined by biological, psychological, and sociological positions [2], is most commonly defined as "...behavior, beliefs, and characteristics that violate society's, or collectivity's, norms, the violation of which tends to attract negative reactions from audiences..." [3]. Behavioral deviance is extremely important in social terms as well as in the psychiatric health care [4], and is therefore subject to attention from many points of view [3]. We propose an assessment of the role of evolutionary factors in the origin and appearance of deviant behavior.

It is assumed that 4 inter-related dimensions outline these abnormalities - distress, dysfunction, deviation and dangerousness [5]. However, the major causes of such social consequences are basic characteristics of living organisms with origin and development of many millions of years ago. It is known that aggressiveness is an important behavioral trait in the animal world indispensable in the struggle for survival and reproduction and has long been confirmed in the evolutionary process since the time of first multicellular creatures. The need to harbor prey or to resist the predator, to fight for resources or for a partner has shaped all animal's morphological and behavioral patterns [6-8] and created the evolutionary heritage for the origin and evolution of humans [8,9].

So, from the very beginning, humans have continued and perfected these behavioral traits, now called deviant behavior - from the Australopithecines, through *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*, and then, through Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*, in about 5 Mya, they have succeeded to become dominant species on Earth - not without involvement of their stubborn, but inventive aggressiveness [8,10,11]. Prehistoric age is a time when violence, rape and robbery are parts of human life (but these behaviors are also present in other animal species) [8,9] and evidences of murder among Paleolithic people are frequent and convincing [8].

The social nature of *Homo sapiens* requires that his propensity for violence should be balanced with the skills of collaboration and cohabitation with conspecifics - because otherwise individual's survival and reproduction is unthinkable without the support of the community in which he exists and through which adaptation problems are solved. That is why man is not only "Man the Hunter", but also "Man the Social Animal" [11]- through skills of reconciliation with others, but also with the abundant manifestation of reciprocal altruism [9]. This change in social and cultural behavior is the fourth major evolutionary step after bipedality, the reduction of the prognathism and the increased encephalisation in the transition from other primates to humans [8].

The social nature of humans is an important adaptive feature, but it is evolutionarily formed in prehistoric conditions for nomads - hunters and gatherers, and carries scars of an age, occupying 95% of the time of human existence. Consequently, modern humans in the highly urbanized society are dealing with the new environment with a Stone Age psychic apparatus [12] and this influences inevitably their behavioral deviance.

In prehistoric times our ancestors lived in small communities of 30 - 60 people [8,12] - most of them relatives and all - personally knowing each other. All acts of violence and unacceptable behavior were controlled by informal norms and taboo, and expectations of others had a strong influence on behavioral manifestations [13,14]. This ensured the basic human needs [15] and the stability in the group/tribe, and out-of-tribe rape and violence have been tolerated in most cases.

It is assumed that this regulatory mechanism, evolved over hundreds of thousands of years, has found a phylogenetic projection through neural circuits as innate purpose-oriented action programs - a new interpretation of CG Jung's glamorous insight, named "archetype" [16,17] linking ontogenetic benefits with realities of individual human life. It is also assumed that there are innate skills to distinguish wrong from right [18,19] - because analogous qualities have been observed in human - related primates [18].

But after the Agrarian Revolution about 12,000 years ago, complex societies, states and civilizations emerged, and people have already lost the opportunity to know directly each other. Increased need for strong social coherence imposed symbolic constructs of "imagined order" (shared ideas about religion, state, rights, money, classes, castes etc.) [20], for maintaining social peace and effective interactions between unfamiliar persons. So, written laws emerged defining "proper behavior" and sanctions for acts of deviance.

These written regulations have created order in society, but adequacy of role-based behavior diminished because of reduced personalization of requirements and rules - since role expectations were no longer of a known person but of anonymous source [13]. As a palliative measure - reminiscences of past epoch, sounded verdicts, commandments and messages "on behalf of Pharaoh... of the King... of God". Because, as the population grew and the trend of urbanization increased, ambiguity about morals and values - due to prescriptions and assessments without a familiar origin - and hence the confidence in such norms was decreased. And we observe an attempt such "masks" of personalization to inspire the power of norms, derived not from real people, but from abstract concepts, from institutions.

It is unrealistic to expect valid parallels of deviance levels in prehistoric times and in the ancient antiquity compared to modern times. But there are empirical observations of an alarmingly increased incidence of murders in crowded neighborhoods and cities vs. rural areas [1,2], with variations in violent behavior depending on the level of anomie in populated areas [2]. Also, cases of serial killers in ancient times are casuistically rare, the first modern description (Jack the Ripper) is during the age of Industrial Revolution in London, Victorian England, and today these cases are sadly common.

That is why we allow the assumption that interpretations of deviant behavior from the positions of evolutionary theory are useful for understanding human nature. This approach helps to understand why adaptive success in controlling behavioral deviance, but evolving into an ancient epoch of hunters and gatherers, is diminishing nowadays because of the impersonal expectations for the role behavior of modern humans.

And let us listen to the wise advice of Erich Fromm: "...One must look for a concept of man's nature in the process of human evolution rather than in isolated aspects like toolmaking..." [21].

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