

ATTITUDE OF YOUNG HUMAN BEING TO OLD AGE

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Abstract: The old age is the notion which awakes anxiety. We do not know how we will behave and how we will proceed in the old age. The old age is not experienced by young people. We create different terms to substitute the notion of the old man: senior, older person. We are afraid of calling old age using exactly this notion. However, everyone of us will be an old person some day. It is obvious that we were children and the same is with the old age. From the beginning of human kind there were young people and older people by their side. Every human being lives in relations to other human beings, both young and older. It depends on human relations how quality of our life looks like. When the relation which causes his dissatisfaction appears, his lack of satisfaction will influence on his life. The group of dissatisfied appear. Europe is helpless towards older people. Programs are created which often does not meet old people's expectations. This elaboration is concerned with the relation between old and young person. It depends on how a young person will perceive an old one and because of that they will create their relations. It is not a problem of an individual country but the problem of the whole civilization.

Key words: a young person, old age, the picture of the old man, social relation.

A human being is a social creature – it is the statement which was adduced from one of E. Aronson's works (2001), namely from the title of one of his works. However, it is not the title which is important but the reflection of the reality which it shows. A human being living in the society is someone who has relations with other individuals as well as other social groups. Relations which have real or potential dimension presume the existence of two elements – beings which create them because they have interpersonal dimension. Among many social relations also appear such, where on the one hand we have a young person and on the other there is older person – senior. This relation is almost the key one from the point of view of the society existence because there always will be younger and older human beings no matter how we will express social relations. The quality of their mutual relations will influence their reception of the surrounding reality. Their opinion of the reality will depend on their activity (or passivity) and will cause their optimistic or pessimistic reception of it. Social quality will depend very much on this relation.

Present time almost enforces the necessity to concentrate on every phase of life including the aging grown up people. All demographic researches make it clear that our society becomes older. The reasons are diverse, on the one hand the possibility of faster retirement, on the other the decline of childbirth cause the disturbance of

proportion between different age groups with increasing number of older people. That is why it becomes important to get to know relations between young and old people. Old age is the subject awaking a lot of emotions because in spite of the fact that a lot of studies concerned with it, old age is still not comprehensible and well known matter. In fact everyday life brings us many proofs of inter-generational misunderstandings and conflicts where young people have problems trying to communicate with older generations. Very popular are the notions of generation gap or war of different age generations in these relations. The reason of so many misunderstandings is quite simple. Young people didn't experience the old age from the obvious reasons and that is why they are incapable of recognizing and understanding the characteristic features of old people. Old people in their past experienced youth but they found oneself in the situation in which many psychosomatic processes run in their own way and what is the most important totally differently from the way and level they occurred for their whole past life. That is why one group (young) and the other (old) are in the situation totally new for themselves. According to Havighurst (after Kielar-Turska, 2002) the old age simply forces the emergence of behaviors adopting old people to the present level of their psychosomatic processes in their bodies. The way every human adopts to this new situation is individual feature, especially because in old age cognitive and emotional processes work differently. In this research crucial matter becomes social aspect, mainly coming into role of an old person and acting like the one in relations with other people. An important matter is also real possibility of death of closest people or even these older people themselves, what becomes far away perspective or even unreal when we refer to young people. Young people do not understand why grandma or grandpa doing shopping for their grandchildren instead of buying hot rolls for them buy other products and claims that shopping was successful¹ – that is why they are often suspected of being malicious. In consequence such situations often end up with quarrels that are bad to old person's nerves and make them realize how clumsy and ineffective they became. Old person realizes that he is not the same person as he was and these negative feelings can break his self-esteem. The stereotype of an old person is common among people, It shows an old person as a human who is disabled, confrontational with unsettled emotional and cognitive processes. Such person can be disregarded, cheated or ridiculed because of his age. Of course we can find emphatic people among relatives or even strangers who understand and accept somebody's age. However, according to social psychology generally we treat other person accordingly to our image of this person. If the mentioned above stereotype appears in relations with old people, these relations will be full of conflicts. We can suppose that in families which live under the same roof well known phenomenon is when family members are from different generations so together live: grandparents, parents and their children. They create the structure. The family members interact together and it depends on their relations how well they will feel with themselves and other family members. Mentioned above relations will create the atmosphere which can be called developmental or if the relations are not proper and lacking understanding - neurotic. Worth-mentioning is P. Watzlawick's opinion (after Griffin, 2003) in which he says that family creates the system. He

¹ It is the real plot from conversation with young people which I conducted.

accentuates the importance of mutual communicational connections. Family is the system in which everyone influences other family members like if they were connected vessels. P. Watzlawick is not interested in somebody's behaviors and their reasons but he is interested in the reactions of other family members as the response to somebody's behavior. According to Watzlawick family is the holistic system with numerous social connections between all family members. It is the approach in which important are relations, mutual connections and quality of the communication. Now we can look at it more closely from practical point of view. Young person, during his everyday family interactions, experiences relations with older members of his family. This young person is not only the observer of older generation's behaviors but he also reacts to them. His reactions can be different depending on situations and vary from indifferent, negative to positive attitudes.

Treating family as a system combines with other aspect namely needs because every member of the family aims to satisfy his own needs. People have needs in every phase of their life. People's functioning and development depends on satisfaction of these needs. The most current approach to needs and hierarchy of needs presented Maslow (1990) who divided needs into five levels. In every phase of life all five levels of needs should be satisfied to allow an individual to develop properly. As it was mentioned earlier all five aspects should be satisfied but every phase of life demands different quality of these needs, they simply change during lifetime. The final goal is the fifth level of needs – the need of self-realization, which is never satisfied because it is directed to the future, to the constant development. When we think about relations of young and older generations it is a real challenge to show proper relations where both young and old people could function properly especially it is difficult in our times. It is the challenge not only for the whole society but also for scholars, gerontologist, pedagogues and psychiatrists.

However, we have to remember that there are families which have proper relations but much more often there is the situation when different age groups are divided by generation gap and growing opposition of family members. In this elaboration we would like to look closer at relations of younger and older generation from the point of view of the former. We have to use empiric researches to achieve our goal, the results will be shown in the later part of this elaboration. We did not aimed at making the hypothesis because the results of our researches were to show the relations between older and young people and especially the way young people treated older one. That is why we concentrate on young people only in this elaboration. Our future works will be directed to older people, their vision of themselves as well as the picture of a young person. Our final goal is the creation of the system which will activate older people. We also assume that after finishing the all-embracing researches we will be able to assume our attitude to many aspects in relations between different age groups including the aspect of intergenerational conflicts.

Empiric depiction of young and old people relations

In this elaboration old age is shown from the point of view of students. It is not an accident that the group which was chosen are students. There are two main reasons for that. First of all it is the young age group (about 22 – the first group of tested people, 24 – the second group of tested people), what else this group of people

is able to express more freely and can easier analyze their own reactions and feelings, much better than young people who ended their education after primary or secondary school. Especially it is more likely because interrogated students were studying social sciences. We questioned forty-two students (from the same university aged 22 - they created first group) who, because of their faculty, had better understanding of interpersonal relations between people of different age groups. We did not plan more wide researches including young people of different sexes, education or social background. Our aim was simply to show confirmation of our thesis. We wanted to indicate some aspect in young-old relations from social psychology, pointing the need, if necessary, to investigate this subject more thoroughly. We also decided to question another group consisting of fifty-two young people (they were aged 24 and were taken from the other university situated in other city). They were asked to define themselves. The reason for that was the possibility of too much subjectivity of previous group in relation to old people. It was connected with their faculty which directed their views and caused lack of objectivity.

In my research I used ACL test (Adjective Check List) – the test which used adjectives and was created by Gough and Heilbrun (1983) in authorized translation by Z. Płużek. The procedure of my investigation is quite simple. In this test is 300 adjectives, the tested person has to mark those adjectives which suit the most to the given question². Tested students were asked to circle those adjectives which describe the old person the best. In the second phase other group of tested students was asked to circle those adjectives which answered the question: who are you? In both phases students could circle as many adjectives as they wanted. They were also informed that there is not one correct answer but every answer is correct and is based on students' opinions and feelings. Below you can see some of these adjectives:

1. light-minded, 2. active, 3. able to adapt, 4. looking for adventures, 5. exaggerated behavior, 6. warm-hearted, 7. aggressive, 8. watchful, 9. sb. with distance, 10. ambitious, 11. worried, 12. apathetic, 13. able to appreciate, 14. play a wise guy, 15. arrogant, 16. artistic type, 17. firm, 18. attractive, 19. autocratic, 20. helpless.

The last version of the test consists of 37 scales. These scales are divided into groups:

Num.	abbreviation	meaning	Singular number	skrót	meaning
1	No. Ckd	The whole number of chosen adjectives	19	Def	The need to subordinate
2	Fav	The number of chosen favorable adjectives	20	Crs	Readiness to be guided
3	Unfav	The number of chosen unfavorable adjectives	21	S Cn	Self-control
4	Com	Typicality	22	S Cfd	Confidence to oneself
5	Ach	Need of achievements	23	P Adj	Self adaptability
6	Dom	Need of domination	24	Iss	The scale of ideal picture of yourself
7	End	Need of endurance	25	Cps	The scale of creative personality
8	Ord	Need of order	26	Kls	The scale of leading abilities
9	Int	Need of understanding oneself and others	27	Mas	The scale of masculinity
10	Nur	Need of nursing	28	Fem	The scale of femininity
11	Aff	Need of affiliation	29	CP	Critical parent
12	Het	Need of heterosexual contacts	30	NP	Nurturing parent

² This test is used in order to define ideal and real picture of investigated person. However, the authors of this test suggested different use of it to investigate other phenomena and issues. But in this study we tried to gain results characterizing the picture of an old man.

13	Exh	Need of exhibiting oneself	31	A	Adult
14	Aut	Need of autonomy	32	FC	Free child
15	Agg	Need of aggression	33	AC	Adjusted child
16	Cha	Need of change	34	A 1	High originality, low intelligence
17	Suc	Need of success	35	A 2	High originality, high intelligence
18	Aba	Need of abasement	36	A 3	Low originality, low intelligence
			37	A 4	Low originality, high intelligence

Table 1 adjectives test (ACL) – the list of names of particular scales (source: Juros, Oleś, 1993).

First group was asked to circle those adjectives which describe an old person the best.

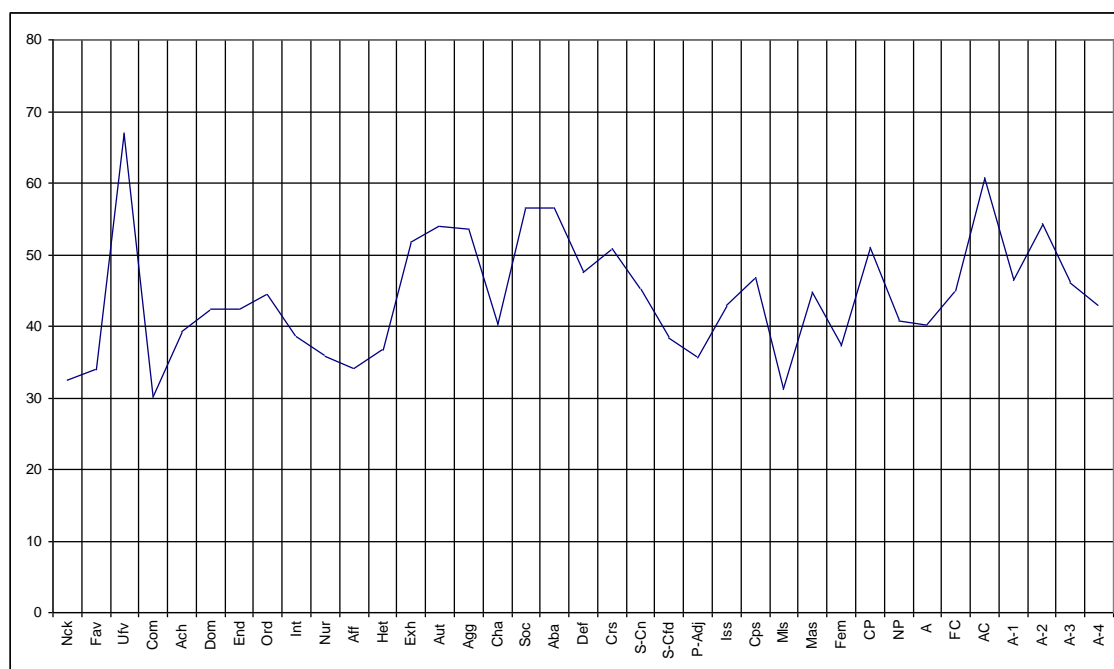


Diagram no. 1 graphic representation of results of research concerned with the vision of old people by students (source: own elaboration)

When students filled in the test and circled chosen adjectives their answers were gathered and counted by the program. Those results were the base to other configurations and later interpretations. All answers showed the intensity of every from 37 scales in the adjectives test. The students' answers, placed at the diagram, were the base of the picture of old person (the first group) and the picture of a young person (the second group).

In case of 16 scales their results go beyond boundaries marked by 40 and 60 point. It is important because according to the authors of this test these two points are crucial when we want to create the picture of a person. Now we will look closer at these scales. We will show two aspects, the first one will show individual features, the second one will include social sphere from point of view of tested young people.

According to tested people the first aspect looks as follow:

Individual features:

- pessimistic vision of the world,
- low resistance to everyday requirements,
- task avoidance because this person is aware that he cannot carry his weight, uncertainty,

- superstitious because of his awareness of his low capability,
- changeability of mood,
- lack of concentration, easy to distract,
- less resolute,
- quarreling type, defensive attitude, ambivalence, aggression,
- easy to be offended,
- fear about the future, scepticism,
- difficulty in mobilizing own abilities,
- low self-discipline,
- low resistance to stress, irrationality, impulsiveness, unpredictability,
- withdrawn.

From the comparison of above-mentioned features come out that in individual aspect appear behaviors which cause rather negative reaction of the surrounding people to an old person. It is also worth mentioning that mentioned features are only listed not ranked according to e.g. intensity of appearance.

The second aspect is concerned with social issues. Now we will look more closer at how the old person looks like from the point of view of the social relations.

Social sphere:

- shun people, distance from them,
- in relations to others has tendency to withdraw, wants to be unnoticed,
- envious of others, (often) hostility towards surrounding,
- have doubts about good intentions of others,
- complicate relations with surrounding, torture oneself with unimportant details,
- hides oneself behind the checked set of behaviors,
- looks for stability in his surrounding,
- has feeling that he is perceived as braked.

If you look closer at these features of social aspect you can realize that a young person has no partnership in relations with an old person. It is rather an enemy who reacts aggressively on every attempt to communicate.

When we compare both aspects picturing an old person, we can notice that there exist “two worlds” one belonging to old people and the other to young generation. They exist side by side rather than penetrate itself.

In the further part of this elaboration we want to mention the results of researches which show the picture of a young person made by a young person itself. We have to mention that this research was made with the second group of young people. In this way we wanted to avoid too subjective combination of both pictures e.g. positive (young) – negative (older), what would happen probably if the same group would take part in both tasks.

Below in the presented diagram two curves were shown, one of them relates to the picture of older people (darker line), the other (lighter line) shows the picture of young people.

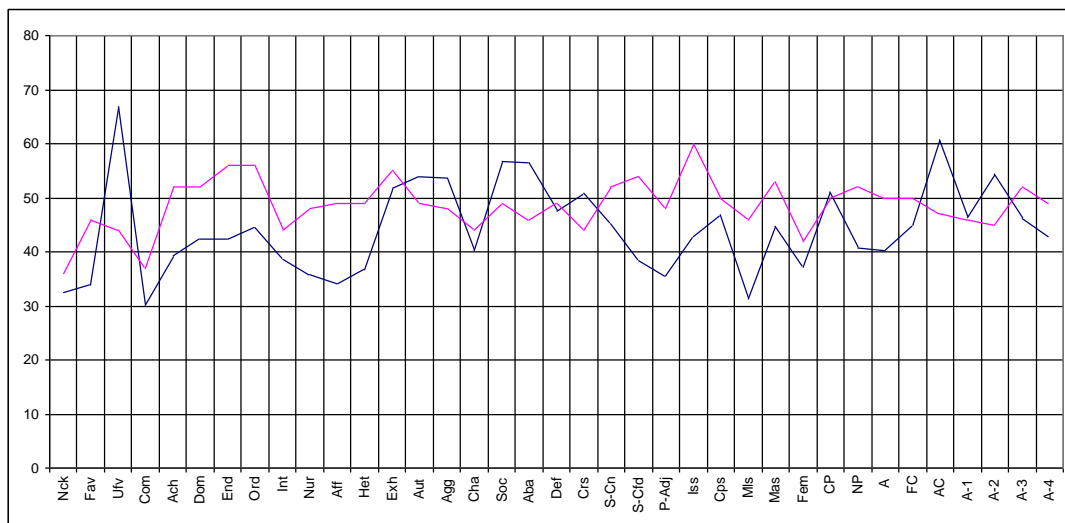


Diagram no. 2. graphical comparison of results of researches concerned with the picture of young and older people.

When we analyze this diagram we can notice that both curves in all scales do not overlap. In case of young people the curve is placed between the 40 and 60 points and in case of older people the curve goes beyond these points in many places. Now we look more closely at scales in which we can notice the biggest differences. This aspect is shown in diagram no. 2.

Singular number of scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Names of scales	Nck	Fav	Ufv	Com	Ach	Dom	End	Ord	Int	Nur	Aff	Het	Exh	Aut	Agg	Cha	Soc	Aba
older	33	34	67	30	39	42	42	44	39	36	34	37	52	54	54	40	57	57
younger	36	46	44	37	52	52	56	56	44	48	49	49	55	49	48	44	49	46
difference	3	12	23	7	13	10	14	12	5	12	15	12	13	5	6	4	8	11
The degree of the difference		13	1		8	17	6	9		10	5	11						14

Singular number of scales	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
Names of scales	Def	Crs	S-Cn	S-Cfd	P-Adj	Iss	Cps	Mls	Mas	Fem	CP	NP	A	FC	AC	A-1	A-2	A-3	A-4
older	48	51	45	38	36	43	47	31	45	37	51	41	40	45	61	46	54	46	43
younger	49	44	52	54	48	60	50	46	53	42	50	52	50	50	47	46	45	52	49
difference	1	7	7	16	12	17	3	15	8	5	1	11	10	5	14	0	9	6	7
The degree of the difference				3	12	2		4				15	16	7					

Table 2 Configuration of the results of the ACL test concerned with the young and old researches (source: own elaboration).

In this configuration we have shown the results of our researches related to the picture of an old person seen by young people (verse no. 3), the picture of young people created by themselves (verse no. 4). In the fifth verse we can see the difference between the results of both stages of researches. The last verse shows the

difference between both group researches, with selected rates which were placed and ranked from the difference equating ten or higher point.

When we compare results of both researches we can notice that at one scale (A-1) there is no difference between the results. In case of ten scales there are differences from one to five points. Nine scales have the difference from six to nine. Ten and more points are visible in case of seventeen scales.

We will try to analyze the results of the researches in both groups. We would like to point out that we will analyze the results of researches concerned with older people and pursued on young people.³ However, before we will try to interpret the results we will look closer at two aspects shown in scales Ufv and Fav.

The biggest difference in the results of researches of both groups was found in scale (Ufv), which includes adjectives with negative meaning. Young people ascribe results at the level of sixty-seven points to older people, and themselves young people place in forty-four points of the scale intensification. It is worth mentioning that in the presented table at number two is scale including adjectives with positive meaning (Fav). Here we can notice inverse situation: older people got adjectives at level of thirty-four points and young people defined themselves at the level of forty-six points. However, it is not so huge difference like in case of previous scale the consistent results show that young treat older people as inferior.

Let's look closer at features and kinds of behaviors connected with both scales in these two researches.

Young people ascribe themselves features which are in opposition to those of older people. In the same way as in the previous schema we would like to show the outline of interpretation of results of our researches. We will present two aspects: individual and social.

Individual features of a young person in comparison to an old one:

- it is an optimistic person,
- he sees the possibility of success in the surrounding reality,
- he adopts to all conditions,
- he sets goals and carry them out consistently,
- he understands that their goal is connected with obligations,
- he organizes himself at work,
- his mood is not changeable (he is not moody),
- he is able to persevere in his actions better than an old person,
- he gets involved in actions which bring benefits to other people,
- he is trustworthy.

When compared to older, young people appear as dynamic, aim at success, they change and create the reality. They are emotionally stable. Older people are their exact opposite. In social aspect:

- they have positive expectations in relations with other people,
- they are efficient in relations with other people,

³ To avoid the repetition related to older people we would like to remark that in every presented aspect young people defined themselves in more positive way than they defined older people.

- they feel better in somebody's company than older people,
- they adopt easier to the requirements and demands of the social group,
- they are protective and caring towards relatives.

In both individual and social features young people present differently than older ones. They feel very good in social group and are able to create and sustain interpersonal relations effectively. It is worth mentioning that they are caring and protective towards relatives. We will not discuss more widely this last assumption because the easiest thing is to disagree. That is why, the next part of our elaboration will contain our attempt to find an answer to the aspect connected with protectiveness and care. We would like to assume our attitude to all results of our researches. Presented results show very important social problem – the quality of relations young and older people. We have the picture of older people which tells us that relations of younger people will not be best. When we interpret the results we want to start with the simple assumption. The picture of an older person is not a choice of a young person – it does not depend on young person's decision. The difficulty appears because both sides are in new situations, they should start from good relations, but circumstances make it hard. As we said both groups are in new conditions. Young people did not experience problems and behaviors typical of older people so they do not understand them. However, we assume that older people are in the new situation too. Their everyday life is composed of many new and unknown earlier behaviors such as: retirement, worse health and mental conditions, their normal abilities start to let them down, they realize that their life comes to an end slowly etc. Both groups are in new conditions and they depend on each other and have to live at least side by side. At this very point we come to the notion of generation war or generation gap. Both groups have bad experiences and bad opinion about another group. They create negative picture of the other group, they often utter such sentences like "in my times it was better", "old people do not want to understand young people though they were young" etc. Now we will try to look at these relations from the psychosocial theory of development by E. Erikson (Hall, Lindzey, 1994). According to this theory human's development from birth to natural death proceeds in eight stages. According to Erikson the key notion is crisis. An individual faces with crisis situation or experience. If he manages to solve the problem – he will develop if not unsolved problem influences his quality of life in the future. Let's look at stages of life of tested students and the object of our researches – old people. Our grown up students are in early adulthood (20–30 years old) – this point of life is called seventh stage according to Erikson, old people (65+) are in the last stage of life – late adulthood. Mentioned above stages of development are connected with the age of tested people (22 – 24 years old people). This age classification places those young people in the stage called early adulthood according to Erikson's (2004) theory. In the tally, which was shown in the form of the table, were shown last three stages. Those stages that are interesting for us were put in italics. When we will analyze all stages of life we can conclude that older and younger people are separated by the stage of middle age. This fact can be the cause of such attitude towards older people. What is more, young people act better in crisis situations, whereas older ones cannot wade through them. Students are in the stage of life when they try to find the partner for the rest of their life. This need is connected with love and devotion to the other human being. Their further stage of life, which

has not started yet, contains ability to care about other people. People who are in the last stage of life (adulthood) experience satisfaction from their life and from what they have done, they also start to accept coming end of their lives. We assumed positive conditions of solving crisis situations. However, life brings often negative and unsuccessful solutions. That is why we can predict that different stage of life, different needs and problems separate those two social groups and they do not feel the need to find out anything about themselves. The table below pictures these trends.

Life crisis	Favourable solutions	Unfavourable solutions
Early adulthood (20-30 years old) intimacy – loneliness A human being looks for close and strong relations with other human beings, especially with the partner of opposite sex	Ability to feel love and devotion towards the other human beings	Loneliness; lacking emotions relations with others
Middle adulthood (40-64 years old) Productivity – stagnation A human being looks for appropriate for himself forms of productivity and creativity, as well as his own contribution to the society	Ability to care about others in the wide meaning of this notion	Lack of development; boredom and excessive care about oneself
Late adulthood (65+) Integration – despair A human being try to judge his life and achievements of his own life	Satisfaction from his own life and his achievements, acceptance of his own death	Grief because of life mistakes and lost chances; fear of death

Table no. 3. Three stages of development by E. Erikson (source: A.Birch, T.Malim 1997).

The usage of Erikson's (2004) perspective in order to explain quality of relations of young and older human beings seems to be a good idea, however there are also other aspects which usage has its reasons. Such issue is the stereotype with the conditions of its emergence.

We assumed that the opinion about old people is not an effect of a young person's decision. So if it is not a conscious decision and appears to be grounded on too general and common knowledge of old people in that case which phenomenon caused such reaction of tested young people. We should look for reasons in the stereotype of an old person. So let's look which elements cause that this stereotype emerges.

When we will look at different reviews concerned with the opinions about stereotypes there appear one particularly important by G. Allport (1956), presented in the fifties of the 20th century. In spite of passing years psychologists have still come back to words of the mentioned above psychologist. According to G. Alport stereotype rationalizes our behavior, unfortunately for the most part causing negative effects. It characterizes of simplified conviction, associated with categorizing and related to the features of other group. They are connected to categories but they are not categories. The mutual element is some feature or few features e.g. ethnic group, or social, which is "rooted" in the category influencing the opinion about this group.

In stereotypes are accepted some features and other are rejected in a simple way. It leads to too simple and usually false picture of other social group or some phenomenon. When we want to get the real picture of a second group or phenomenon one condition is required – we have to get concrete and detailed information about it. Through the stereotypes we make generalization creating a false image of group or person. In case of stereotype concrete information is not needed because we are sure that we have enough knowledge to have an opinion on given subject. Stereotype which is generalization, make social relations more difficult.

In many opinions cognitive aspect was accentuated as the one that is the root of stereotypes. The discussion on this subject concentrated mainly on accentuating particular cognitive elements. The element which causes the difference is rigidity of stereotype – this rigidity causes treating the stereotypes as subcategory. The opinion about another group is subordinated to the model which is characterized as firm and lacking (or significant reduction) consideration by the subject any new piece of information. Cognitive schemes can evolve whereas stereotypes cannot. Similar opinion regards R. Sternberg. According to him on the basis of “*some model we make excessive generalization*” (2001, s. 293). He thinks that stereotypes limit our thinking and our abilities to solve problems. That is why stereotype does not evolve and is not susceptible to changes.

That is why we will look closer at social stereotypes and their meaning in social relations. In everyday interpersonal contacts most often the notion of stereotype is shown in negative context. Practically we do not meet positive opinion on this subject. In conversations is very often used the argument “it is the stereotype” which has to explain all misunderstandings, and in this way to some extent accepting these stereotypes. That is why in discussions e.g. on TV between the representatives of both sexes on the subject of role of women, first side firmly states that the second side does homage to the stereotype and the second tries to deny it. The effect of such approach (it makes the stereotype firm) is lack of changes in attitude. Similar effects can be seen with reference to other topics, in which stereotypes play the main role. AIDS is the example of topic subjected to stereotypes (and the results which it brought – it cause the need to take care about sick people by social agencies), handicapped people, homeless, unemployed, sick, poor, rich, criminals etc. The issue of feedback between young and older people is marked by stereotypes too. So called generation war exhibits the picture of two groups different in age, in which dominate accusations eliminating almost entirely the perspective of mutual existence, it is the stereotype, firm and lacking concrete knowledge of other group, group which becomes in some way an enemy.

We know that stereotypes exist and to prove it we show one of aspects of obtained results of our researches. So young people perceived in their own picture the feature which is sensitivity for other people and the readiness to help them. However, it turns out that this readiness does not go beyond the next stage of development (according to Erikson’s theory (2004) - middle adulthood).

Conclusions

The way old people function and their relations with other people and social groups is not a new phenomenon. It is observed in every era. We can find the good example in Old Testament when Noah's sons mock at their father. Also examples found in diverse literature picture an old person as malicious and clumsy. Our times does not differ in this opinion. The conflict between old and young has existed for ever so perhaps there is no point in investing time in this subject because it will still exist. However, the life span is becoming longer because of conditions of our living as well as the development of civilization. Scholars intensively investigate the old age, the best proof are diverse psychological theories (e.g. the theory of psychosocial development by E. Erikson which was used in this elaboration). The society discovers with some surprise old people's activity – very popular 21st century universities. Young people's relations with old people cannot be meaningless. When we will try to eliminate stereotypes connected with old people which consequences can we expect? Younger people should get better knowledge of older people and because of it stop forgetting and ignoring their existence. Such solution is empathy defined as understanding of other people's spirit. An important element in creating high level of empathy is individual experience. We do not try to understand objectively noticed person but rather in his subjective picture (Gulin, 1994). Empathy is a phenomenon developing through the whole life of every human being (Hoffman, 2006). Every child observing its parents' behavior learns empathy and social behaviors. This aspect also relates to empathy to older people. This mechanism pictured very well by M. A. Barnett (1980) making from parents – children relations the ground for social attitudes of every child. M. A. Barentt shows three stages of this process. In the first stage a child receives parents' feeling towards him and other family members, the second stage is the observation made by child. The third stage is the comparison of feeling and verbal declarations with concrete parents' behaviors. However, it is important to say that in this way child also learns stereotypes (Stefanowicz-Zawiszewska, 2006). It depends on the parents behavior who can act according to the stereotype or with empathy towards older people.

The quality of relations between older and younger people need a lot of stimulation nowadays. Without it there will be another era with generation gap and generation war so in other words nothing will change. Many our doings require reinforcements or corrections by advising and helping. Part of society is not able to face and manage with everyday life that is why they get help from different sorts of specialists. Features typical of old aged people (quite well known from scientific point of view) are an enigma for the most of the society. That is why a need appears to create the profession whose representatives will be professionally trained to work with older people as well as they will educate and mediate the relations between older and younger people of the society. These stereotypical behaviors should be replaced by scientific knowledge. It is impossible to separate the problem of older people from the society because their functioning is closely connected to different aspects of social nature such as: family, friends. That is why it is important to start researches in which the main aim will be picturing the young person by the older people – to see young people in their eyes. In this elaboration such researches were not planned but it does not mean that we are not aware of such a need. Researches which were presented in our study can be the beginning to the further investigations.

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