

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS

MACANOVIĆ Nebojša

*University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Political Science, Department of pedagogy and methods,
Associate Professor, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA*

E-mail: nebojsa.macanovic@fpn.unibl.org

MRKOVIĆ Danilo

*University of Modern Sciences - CKM, Department of Security, Mostar, BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA*

E-mail: danilomrkovic@gmail.com

SREDOJEVIĆ Ognjen

*Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Srpska, Gradiška Police Department, MA, doctoral
student at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Banja Luka, (BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA)*

E-mail: sredojevicognjen@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The increasing dysfunctionality of society is also reflected in the crisis of the value system among young people. One of the indicators of such social anomie is precisely the appearance of juvenile delinquency. This phenomenon is present in all societies, but it is certainly more widespread in societies that are going through transition and that have a number of social and economic difficulties. Regardless of the causes of this phenomenon and numerous endogenous and exogenous criminogenic factors, the social factor is certainly one of the key aspects of the prevalence of this phenomenon. The goal of this paper is to point out the social characteristics and building resilience of juvenile delinquency, as well as a way to help society to strengthen protective factors and more effectively assist in the resocialization of criminals

Keywords: *social characteristics, juvenile delinquents, resocialization, dysfunctionality of society.*

JEL classification: *A12, A14, K14*

INTRODUCTION

The crisis of the value system among young people arose as a reflection of the situation in the society in which we live. Corruption, injustice, loss of empathy, violence, erosion of morals have influenced that young people increasingly enter the world of crime very early, even at the age of twelve [1]. Such children have idols in older criminals. Unlike their idols, today's generations are much more brutal, dangerous, cold-blooded, more aware that they cannot be held accountable for criminal acts because they are not fourteen years old, etc. The consumption of narcotics and alcohol while committing criminal acts, the use of cold arms and firearms, daily disruption of public order and peace have become their usual practice. They see society as a criminalized street where they want to impose their own rules. Unfortunately, there are more and more such children who started the path of crime very early. This paper also aimed at pointing out some causes that lead to such deviant changes in behavior, as well as in growing up itself. Not wanting to downplay the importance of numerous factors that influence delinquent behavior, we will primarily deal with social factors in our work, because they are the most common and most indicative in our society.

REVIEW OF TANGENT RESEARCH ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

There are numerous studies on juvenile delinquency in the world and in our country. According to the report of the European Commission from 2006, in Great Britain, minors commit 10% of the total number of misdemeanors, while in France, persons aged 13 to 19 commit 5% of crimes. Also, in some European countries, the limits of criminal responsibility for minors are being moved from 14 to 13 years (France, Greece, Poland), and in some countries this limit is even 12 years [2].

Juveniles in Serbia make up about 7% of all sanctioned or convicted persons, and they most often commit crimes against property and crimes against life and limb. Jugović states that 81% of juvenile offenders are criminally sanctioned for crimes against property, and 8% for crimes against life and limb, and that a constant increase in the share of crimes

against life and limb in total juvenile crime is noticeable. Official data indicate that in 2007, in the structure of criminal offenses committed by minors, the most common crimes were: aggravated theft, theft and concealment 37%, then robbery 19% and murder 13.7%. Certain changes are noticeable in the structure of criminal offenses committed by minors. Namely, at the end of 2013, in addition to theft and aggravated theft, which accounted for 35% of the total structure of criminal offenses by minors, and robbery, which accounted for 16.3%, the third place in terms of representation was violent behavior with a share of 11%. Murders of minors are in fourth place in the overall structure of committed criminal offenses by minors with 5% [3].

Based on research conducted in the Republic of Croatia in the period from 1993 to 2012, an average of 2,500 juvenile delinquents were reported annually. The group of criminal offenses against property has the largest share among convicted minors, where the share of convicted minors in the structure is as much as 57.5%. These results confirm the results of research into the issue of juvenile delinquency, which state that property crimes are most often involved. Within this group of crimes, the most frequent is aggravated theft (52.2%), followed by theft (18.3%), robbery (16.9%), and destruction and damage to other people's property (6.9%). This group of criminal offenses is followed by those against life and limb with a share of 11.3%, against public order (9.4%), against values protected by international law (8.2%), and with an almost insignificant share are those against payment security of traffic (0.8%) [4]. Juvenile delinquency is a serious problem both in the world and in our country. According to many theoreticians, the increase in juvenile delinquency in Bosnia and Herzegovina is most often linked to a low standard of living. According to the research conducted in FBiH in the period from 1996. to 2003. in the total number of persons who committed a criminal offense, minors participated in the range of 4.85% in 2001. to 9.36% in 1997. According to research data conducted in FBiH from 2004., which refers to the time period from 1996. to 2003. it can be seen that in the structure of criminal offenses committed by minors, and against which the competent institutions filed criminal charges, the most common crimes against property are aggravated theft. According to these data, the highest number of criminal reports was filed in 1996. and amounts to 88%, and the lowest percentage of criminal offenses was recorded in 2003. and amounts to 75.37% [5]. When looking at the period from 2014-2018. year, the share of minors in the total number of persons reported for a committed criminal

offense in the territory of the FBiH has a slightly decreasing trend. In

2014., minors accounted for 5.27% of the total number of persons who committed a criminal offense, while in 2018. the proportion of minors decreased significantly and amounted to 3.22%. According to the official data of the Federal Police Administration for the period from 2014.-2018. year, it can be observed that among minors the predominant crimes are against property, but also crimes against life and body, against human health, against the freedom and rights of man and citizen, as well as public order and legal traffic [6].

Based on the data of the Republic Statistical Institute of Republic of Srpska in the period from 2015. to 2019., 217 juvenile offenders were sentenced annually. The group of criminal offenses against property has the largest share among convicted juveniles, as many as 70.04% of juvenile offenders. Crimes against life and body account for 16.5%, followed by crimes against people's health with 5.06%. Criminal offenses against sexual integrity and traffic safety have the smallest share in this group with 4.14% of the total number of criminal offences. The data of the Republic Statistical Institute of Republic of Srpska show that in the period from 2014.-2019. in 2010. the most frequently pronounced institutional educational measure of referral to an educational correctional home with the participation of 87.2% of the total number of imposed institutional educational measures. The measure of referral to an educational institution and the measure of referral to a special institution for treatment and training in the mentioned period have equal participation, and they participate with 6.3% in the total number of imposed institutional measures [7].

In the literature, one can find older studies that dealt with the relationship between parents and children in modern families. Thus, according to a survey of informal groups in Yugoslavia, 70% of young people state that they occasionally clash with their parents, 22% declare that there is no conflict, and only 8% of the respondents are unable to identify whether there is a conflict or not. The most common reasons for conflict between children and parents are: life choices and attitudes of young people, money issues, going out, school problems, relationships with the opposite sex, dressing and appearance [8]. The delinquent behavior of parents affects the delinquent behavior of children in the long term. Some of the most important information about the influence of parents' delinquent behavior

on their children's delinquent behavior was collected by the British criminologist David Farrington, who together with his colleagues conducted a series of longitudinal studies, including the Cambridge Survey on the Development of Delinquent Behavior (Youth Survey and the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development). Some of the most important results of the mentioned research are:

- A significant number of fathers of young delinquents exhibit delinquent behavior. About 8% of youth whose fathers do not exhibit delinquent behavior become chronic criminals compared to 37% of youth whose fathers engage in various criminal activities.
- Peer violence in schools can be inter and trans generational. Children of bullies become bullies, who also become fathers who have exhibited peer violence. Thus, there are families in which grandfather, father and son exhibited peer violence in schools.
- Children of parents who have been sentenced to prison terms are at a much higher risk of becoming perpetrators of criminal offenses compared to other children. It is known that a deficient family due to divorce is a much stronger criminal factor than a deficient family caused by the illness or death of one of the parents. Separation from children caused by parents going to prison predicts children's antisocial behavior later over the age of 32, which indicates the long-term negative consequences of such a family situation [9].

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN MODERN SOCIETY

Given that in this paper we deal primarily with the social characteristics of juvenile delinquents, in the following part of the paper we will present some of the main social characteristics in order to show how important they are in the occurrence of juvenile delinquency. Some of the most significant social characteristics of minors are: dysfunctional family, aggressive behavior, crisis of the value system, criminogenic infection by adult criminals.

The modern family has undergone significant structural changes. There are more and more incomplete families. What is indicative of recent years is the increasing dysfunctionality of families in which violence is expressed,

which is often reflected in the behavior of children [10]. Numerous sociological studies have shown that the more stable a family is, the less likely it is that its youngest members will go down the path of crime. All "unstable" families can be divided into two basic groups: deficient (incomplete) and degraded (ruined). Incomplete families can be further divided into incomplete due to the death of one of the parents and incomplete due to the divorce of the parents. No matter how paradoxical it sounds, as it has been pointed out several times, it has been established that the incompleteness of the family due to the death of one of the parents is a far worse basis for the development of criminality in children compared to the incomplete family due to divorce. This is interpreted as the fact that all children's attention after the death of one parent remains focused on the other parent, and in this way the probability of criminal behavior is greatly reduced. One study conducted in Serbia in the period from 1958.-1962. showed that as many as 61.8% of juvenile delinquents come from broken families [8].

Aggressiveness is a character trait of a large number of juvenile delinquents. It manifests itself especially in criminal offenses with elements of violence, i.e. blood and sexual offences. Aggression is mainly directed towards persons with whom juvenile delinquents are in a certain conflict. Most often, it is about parents, friends, teachers and other people from their environment. Aggressive attacks are attacks on the life and body of another person without any real reason or reason, or it is a violent reaction to almost insignificant reasons [11].

Parental unemployment or insufficient financial income have economic significance for the family and its functioning. Parental unemployment reflects negatively on the standard and causes other negative consequences, including juvenile delinquency. However, the employment of both parents, in conditions of insufficient development of appropriate social institutions, can have unfavorable consequences for young people. Children from such families, while the parents are at work, are often left to fend for themselves or, at best, to older relatives, who are certainly not adequate substitutes for their parents [12].

The influence of the family on the delinquent behavior of young people has been the subject of interest of many criminologists. Lombroso, for example, considered that this factor is significant, in addition to the factor of inheritance, and that among criminals there is a huge number of

children of wicked parents, illegitimate children and orphans. The married couple Gluk found in their research that in over 50% of cases, parents of delinquents live apart from them, that delinquents have less cohesive families, emotional ties are looser, and parents show less love for their children. Fathers are unfair and excessively strict, and mothers neglect children and are unfair. McCord et al divided families into the following categories: cohesive, disjointed, quarrelsome-affective, and quarrelsome-neglectful. Cohesive families prevail among non-delinquents, and quarrelsome-neglectful families among delinquents [11].

The fact is that the crisis of society also affects the creation of a crisis in the family, and this directly affects its youngest members who live in a time of rejection of values that have been present and acceptable for years, while new values, according to which the social system should function, are still they are not defined and formed. This split creates in children and young people the erosion of morals, disorientation of attitudes, maladjusted behavior that takes on the property of a virus and spreads, which very easily creates criminogenic infected persons. Such persons violate previously established social norms and rules and continue to commit more serious offenses that lead to criminal acts and being labeled by society as juvenile delinquents. This fact clearly shows us the path that begins with criminogenic infection and ends with juvenile delinquency [13].

Criminogenic infection is a phenomenon that is closely related to the characteristics of modern society (broken family relations, aggression, abuse, destructive attitudes...), and which arises due to the lack and non-acceptance of the principles and values prescribed by society, which results in non-adherence Disgusted behavior of people that is not in accordance with social norms and customs. Looking at it in a narrower sense, criminogenic infection is a "syndrome" that is especially pronounced among young people, and which for them represents a system of values that they accept as the only correct one, regardless of the existing one that defines society, which results in maladjusted antisocial behavior of young people. It is a phenomenon that is a consequence of the lack of socialization, and which is recognized in the attitudes of children and young people, which are contrary to the value system and norms of the society in which they live. As such, criminogenic infection is an inexhaustible source and basis for the occurrence of all forms of maladaptive behavior, which indicates the fact that no one is born bad,

problematic or criminal, and that deviant forms of behavior in young people do not happen by chance [2].

The occurrence of youth delinquency can also be influenced by the negative attitude of parents towards social values and regulations, which protect those values, which is expressed in the form of criminality and other socio-pathological forms of parental behavior. This kind of parental behavior disrupts the family atmosphere and directly affects the emotional status of children, who are particularly vulnerable during the age of minors [12]. A significant criminogenic influence on children is exerted by a family in which the parents themselves are delinquents. Children identify with and imitate their elders, and at the same time parents with behavioral deviations lose authority and control over the child.

Inadequate spending of free time is also a significant characteristic of juvenile offenders. It is a fact that minors show most deviant forms of behavior in their free time. This does not mean that unorganized free time is a direct cause of delinquent behavior. The causes and reasons are much more complex and are related to social circumstances and individual opportunities of minors. Unorganized spending of free time, which young people have more and more, leads to boredom, so different ways are sought to overcome it [13].

A special role in the juvenile delinquency prevention system is played by school and education, which not only play a significant role in the upbringing and education of minors, but also in the formation of their personality, as well as the overall and emotional development of young people. The special advantage of the school as an educational institution is reflected in the fact that it makes contact with the largest part of the young population from early youth onwards. Therefore, the school should be able to see and correct various types of deviations in the behavior of young people. The main goal of educational institutions is to help young people develop their creative capacities and become useful members of society through the educational process [14]. Juvenile criminals in Bosnia and Herzegovina have a negative attitude towards school and early school leaving. There is also evident aversion to school and teachers, which manifests itself through a negative attitude, frequent conflicts, running away from school, and often complete cessation of schooling. As a consequence of low achievement, absenteeism and frequent interruptions of schooling, this population has large gaps in knowledge and functional

illiteracy, and is characterized by underdeveloped work habits and irresponsibility towards school obligations. Others can be added to the mentioned problems, such as difficulties in mastering the material, poor concentration, lack of self-discipline and poor knowledge of learning techniques [15], [16]. Juveniles most often commit property crimes, with an emphasis on aggression. Unlike adults, they often commit crimes in groups of two or more minors, which are mostly of an informal nature. The reason for the association is the commission of a specific crime or a series of crimes (serious theft, vehicle confiscation, and sexual offenses) [17]. Juvenile criminals have their idols in older criminals who, unfortunately, are increasingly popularized by the media. The criminal and life stories of such people are increasingly present in various digital and written media that are not censored by anyone, which has a negative impact on the socialization and upbringing of children and young people. All these social characteristics and causes of juvenile delinquency indicate that this deviant phenomenon is the result of the state of society and that it is necessary to adopt some new legal measures and more effective programs of prevention, but also of treatment and resocialization in general if we want to achieve more effective results in preventing and suppressing this deviant occurrences in children and young people.

CONCLUSION

The social characteristics that we have identified in this work are also indicators for the society itself and its institutions, which problems must be worked on more and how to alleviate them. This is the reason why it is necessary to pay much more attention to the causes that lead to juvenile delinquency, but also to the institutional re-educational treatment and resocialization of juvenile offenders. Society must strengthen its prevention mechanisms and strengthen family competencies in order to fight as successfully as possible with numerous risk factors that contribute to the appearance of juvenile delinquency.

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