

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECT AND PERSONALITY OF JUVENILE AS DETERMINANTS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY\*

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**Abstract:** *Juvenile delinquency has long been neglected by the purveyors of scientific thought. The justification has been found in a low rate of return, ignoring the fact that the low rate of return of juvenile delinquency is an illusion, whereby a considerable number of adult offenders are recruited from juvenile delinquents. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to the study of this phenomenon and its causes, especially to the analysis of criminogenic factors, which can ultimately affect its reduction by applying appropriate preventive measures. Following that, the authors deal with the criminogenic factors of juvenile delinquency, presenting them through exogenous and endogenous etiology.*

**Key words:** *juveniles, delinquency, etiology, socio-economic factors, criminogenic factors.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency, as a phenomenon with a long history, is a faithful companion of every society, representing a significant social and legal problem. The return rate for minors is 17%. However, with regard to the recidivism rate of minors and due to the short duration of minors and long duration of criminal proceedings, an impression could be that the rate of recidivism among minors is significantly lower, regardless of whether the primary juvenile delinquent commits a criminal offense after turning 18. If such persons were still considered minors, the recidivism rate of minors would be between 80% and 85% (Димовски, 2015, стр. 141). This refers to a need to deal with the phenomenological and especially the etiological characteristics of juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency is conditioned by the same criminogenic factors as criminality in general, which indicates the necessity to study it through exogenous

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and endogenous etiology. However, it does not mean there are no specific factors that contribute to the juvenile delinquency occurrence. In this regard, the following part will deal with the specific criminogenic factors of juvenile delinquency through the prism of the social environment, economic status and personality of the juvenile delinquent.

## **2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AS A FACTOR IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

One of the most significant criminogenic factors of the social environment is the primary family. Criminologists, such as Rolf Loeber and Magda Loeber-Stouthammer, consider the family to be a key factor in the future criminal behavior of juveniles. Numerous criminological studies were based on the assumption that there is a link between the behavior of minors, on the one hand, and the other hand the absence of one parent, criminal past of parents, strictness in the upbringing of minors, neglect and abuse of children, domestic violence, abuse of psychoactive substances in the family, existence of mental illnesses in the family, socio-economic status of the parents, etc (Petrosino & et al, 2009, p. 109).

In order to illustrate the importance of the family on the creation of personality and his/her behavior in future, we refer to the psychologist Nikola Roth: "Children from families with a mutual trust, love and friendly relations between parents themselves and between parents and children are more likely to be adults with positive characteristics (with a sense of independence, self-confidence, balance, with good social contacts), in relation to children from families where are frequent conflicts and disagreements and where is not enough love and care for the child (Димовски & Мирић, Политика сузбијања малолетничке делинквенције као детерминанта друштвеног развоја, 2013, стр. 286).“ Accordingly, there is a complexity of family relationships and their contribution to positive personality or to a person prone to delinquent behavior. In other words, the family has a decisive influence in the first years of child life, since the child identifies with the parents. In most of the cases, a child would grow up as a socialized person and ready to behave conformist if parents respect social norms. If the parents are inclined to violate social norms, there is a significantly greater chance for a child to become a problematic person (Marković & Lakićević, 2020, pp. 114-115). Education within the family is, according to the famous French criminologist Emile Durkheim, very important. The goal of education and development of each individual is the improvement of everything he/she is capable of, determining that the task of education is the harmonious development of all human abilities to the highest points that can be achieved (Marković & Lakićević, 2020, p. 120).

Numerous criminologists have conducted research regarding the influence of the family on crime. It should be noted that numerous studies have shown that the absence of a father in the family is a reliable indicator of the criminal behavior of minors. Fathers contribute to economic stability, increases a feeling of security in the family, participate in raising children, which reduces children's stress.

Conversely, its absence due to divorce or death results in children of single mothers being more likely to use drugs, become members of juvenile gangs, be expelled from school, or become juvenile murderers. It is important to note the results of the research within the project "Violence in American public schools", showing that 71% of teachers, as well as 90% of government employees, believe that insufficient control at home is the main factor in children's violent behavior in schools (Maginnis, 1997, p. 62).

Another noteworthy research by psychiatrist Kellam Sheppard came to the conclusion that control of children at home is less in single-parent families, especially in families without a father. Namely, boys over the age of ten, who grew up only with mother, regardless of family income, are more prone to delinquent behavior compared to children who grew up in multi-member families where the father was present (Константиновић-Вилић & et al, стр. 94).

Research conducted by criminologist Rankin aimed to establish the relationship between broken homes, as he called deficient families, and delinquency among two samples of American children interviewed in 1967 and 1972. He concluded that broken homes were more strongly associated with "family" offenses such as running away and truancy than with other types of more serious juvenile misconduct. Further, a study conducted by Apel and Kaukinen proved significant heterogeneity in the risk of delinquent behavior among groups of young people living in a married or cohabiting union. Based on the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, their research results showed if two biological parents are married, the child is less likely to participate in delinquent activities. If biological parents are cohabiting only, youth are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior. In addition, they found that youth with one biological parent cohabiting with a non-biological partner showed unusually high rates of antisocial behavior, especially if the custodial parent was the child's biological father (Parks, 2013, pp. 8-9). Reasonably, the question that arises is what is different in families where the parents are not married compared to families where the parents are married partners. The research has shown that it is more likely that married parents will stay together compared to those who are in an extramarital union. Two thirds of cohabiting partners split up before their child turns 12, compared to one quarter of married parents. Additional studies have pointed to three differences between cohabiting and married unions - family planning, parents' level of education and income level. Planned procreation is associated with numerous benefits for children. On the other hand, unplanned parenthood is associated with a higher risk of family breakdown. If the offspring is planned, even if it is an extramarital union, it will most likely turn into marriage. In the case of an unwanted pregnancy, parents are more prone to conflict, exhibit a lower level of happiness and a higher rate of depression compared to parents who planned offspring. At the same time, another difference is embodied in the fact that parents in married unions have a higher level of education. Namely, married partners are four times more likely to have a higher level of education than unmarried partners living together. The difference in the level of education is reflected in the number of years of life of married and

cohabiting partners. Married partners are much older than cohabiting partners. As spouses are better educated and older, it is understandable that they earn more. This difference is most visible in the salary of a married father compared to a father in a cohabiting union. Thus, married men earn \$55,000 a year, while man who lives with the mother of his child in a common-law relationship earns only \$29,000 (Brookings, 2023).

Degraded families can be defined as a family with broken relationships between its members, which can lead to inadequate socialization of children and to their delinquent behavior, as well as to the commission of criminal acts by the spouse. Therefore, it can be concluded that the greatest criminogenic significance within a degraded family is a bad relationship between spouses and disturbed relationship between parents, on one hand, and children, on the other hand (Димовски, 2012, стр. 251).

Children may exhibit delinquent behavior by imitating their parents who commit criminal acts. Experts have called this phenomenon a criminogenic family hearth. In order to indicate the influence of the criminogenic family hearth, we will cite a study on the link between family relationships and the manifestation of aggression. According to this research, if fathers are not criminals, only 8% of minors engage in criminal behavior. However, if fathers have been convicted of various crimes, 37% of their children become delinquents (Siegel & Welsh, 2010, p. 179). Similar research was conducted by the University of Pittsburgh (Loeber & et al, 1998, pp. 141-172) and the University of Cambridge (Farrington & et al, 2006, p. 5), according to which in families where father, mother, brother or sister behave criminally, there is a significant risk factor for delinquent behavior of the child as well.

According to Keenan and Shaw's 1995 research, which is also noteworthy, the aggression of two-year-old children is the result of the existence of criminal acts committed by their parents. Farrington, Hardegen and others pointed out that adolescents who behave criminally have a significantly higher percentage of parents prone to crime. Tremblau, Harden, Macduff et al found that family relationships can explain 38% of aggressive behavior (Tremblay, 2000, p. 132).

The next criminogenic factor of juvenile delinquency is the socio-economic status of juvenile delinquents. The initial hypothesis of numerous criminological studies was that juvenile delinquency is a consequence of lower socio-economic status. A study conducted by Shaw, McKay and Elliott confirmed this hypothesis. The majority of juvenile delinquents belong to the families of low-skilled workers. Criminologist Merul came to similar results. Minors from low-income families are "forced" to behave delinquently, neglecting education, which further reduces the chance of leading a conformist life in the future. Criminologist Brut obtained similar results and according to her research, 19% of juvenile delinquents come from extremely poor families, while 37% belong to families with incomes above the extreme poverty line. What separates her research from others is the elaboration of obtained data. She claimed that the large share of juvenile delinquents from a lower social class is not conditioned by poverty, but by the ability of juveniles from

richer families to avoid prosecution (Kumar Sharma, 2004, p. 208). In addition to the aforementioned research, it is important to refer to the results of Pagani's research, who believed that there is a significant connection between the permanent status of the lower class and the repeated involvement of young people in serious crimes. The explanation for the delinquent behavior of young people from poor families is reflected in the attitude that such children tend to acquire an inferior status, growing up in an environment that encourages rebellion against authority and aggression against wealthier members of society. At the same time, it should be pointed out that certain criminal acts are committed by minors for simple existence (Pagani & et al, p. 1210). In other words, low socioeconomic status results in negative self-perception and lower self-efficacy, which was supported in the research of Jarjoura, Triplett and Brinker (Jarjoura & et al, 2003, pp. 59-187).

It is interesting to point out another connection between poverty and juvenile delinquency, but from a different perspective - reduced effectiveness of the deterrent function of juvenile justice, the judicial system aims to deter juveniles from participating in delinquent behavior. If we are dealing with minors who come from comfortable homes and wealthier families, the threat of criminal sanctions, especially juvenile prison, is a sufficient deterrent for this group of minors to avoid committing criminal acts. However, such an attitude is not valid when it comes to minors who grew up in poverty (Cole & Smith, 2006, p. 32).

Another specific criminogenic factor of juvenile delinquency is war. Namely, the war represents one of the factors of change in the scope and appearance of juvenile delinquency. As fathers are on the battlefield, and mothers due to the transition to a war economy have to work in factories, minors are often without adequate parental care, which indirectly leads to (pre)delinquent behavior (Sharma & Sharma, 2006, p. 384). In other words, given the fact that fathers are involved in war events, in territories that are not under direct war actions but are located nearby, women's criminality increases, as well as juvenile delinquency. To begin with, we will list data on juvenile delinquency during the Second World War. Namely, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation at the time, Edgar Hoover, reported that arrests of young boys and men actually dropped by 10% during 1942. However, additional analysis showed that arrests of underage girls increased by 55.7%. Based on the statistical data, the arrests of girls under 21 for prostitution increased by 64.8%, for other sexual offenses by 104.7%; due to vagrancy by 124.3%, due to disorder by 69.6%, and due to drunkenness increased by 39.9% (Youth on the Loose, 1943, p. 7). However, the rate of juvenile delinquency for the same period increased by 8% for boys and 31% for girls (Bailey, 1977, p. 148). It is interesting to present the data in relation to the federal state of Oregon where, according to the mayor of Portland William Bowes, where in the period 1942-1943 was an increase in juvenile delinquency by 500% compared to the 1940-1941 report (Letter from William Bowes to Roger Folgate, 1943). There are similar data in Great Britain, which during the first year of the World War II experienced an increase in juvenile delinquency by more than 40% (Cqpress, 2023).

The civil war in the former republic of Yugoslavia can be used to confirm the thesis about the growth of juvenile delinquency during the war. The volume of juvenile delinquency during wartime operations increased from 1990 to 1995, with its peak during the middle of the civil war (Димовски & Мирић, Политика сузбијања малолетничке делинквенције као детерминанта друштвеног развоја, 2013, стр. 287).

Although the school, as an organized social institution, has a positive influence on the education and upbringing of people, it can also be seen as a criminogenic factor in a certain sense. Namely, with its continuous work, the school carries out certain activities with the aim of educating young people by mastering certain teaching programs. However, during the implementation of such process, it is possible to encounter various problems which, in cooperation with other criminogenic factors, may result in the commission of a criminal act. The causes of problems in the schooling process are cited as: excessive teaching materials, insufficient expertise of the teaching staff, the existence of a group of privileged students due to the status of their parents, conflicts with the teaching staff and other students, inconsistency in the reform process of the school system, uninteresting school materials (Димовски, 2012). School is the primary environment for a child during school age. In the case of failure at school, there may be a feeling of alienation from the authorities whose standards are not met, as well as from the social expectations presented by the authorities. Minors who are poor students tend to socialize with others, which can encourage peer rebellion against normative standards of behavior. (Wertlieb, 1982, p. 15). Criminologist Baker pointed out that early aggressive behavior can lead to difficulties in the classroom, resulting in poor grades. In the end, such minors are more prone to delinquent behavior (Education and Delinquency - Summary of a Workshop, 2000, p. 13).

In order to properly see the negative impact of the school, it should be noted that in addition to juvenile delinquency, it has a long-term effect on the commission of criminality by adults. Looking at juvenile delinquency through the lens of education, we can see from Marvin Wolfgang's research that only 9% of juvenile delinquents have completed high school, compared to 90% of non-delinquent juveniles (Siegel & Welsh, 2010, p. 228). The negative impact of school on juvenile delinquency can be observed in different types of criminality. So, for example, it is enough to mention the research of the criminologist Busch and his colleagues, according to which juvenile perpetrators of criminal acts of murder during schooling had numerous problems compared to the control group. Criminologist Muers obtained data where out of 25 juvenile murderers, 76% had certain learning problems and that 86% failed at least one grade (Heckel & Shumaker, 2001, p. 36). Likewise, it should be pointed out that the aforementioned studies by the University of Cambridge and the University of Pittsburgh revealed that poor school results are a predictor of juvenile delinquency. In the study in 1996, criminologists Maguin and Loeber found that poor school performance was associated with the frequency of delinquent offending, the severity of crimes, and persistence in delinquency (Education and Delinquency - Summary of a Workshop, 2000).

The next criminogenic factors of juvenile delinquency can be the means of mass communication. Mass media means newspapers, television, radio, internet and video games. Not all of these tools were created at the same time, but they all have a strong influence on our understandings and simultaneously create public opinion in general. Although the media is associated with a positive effect on people's behavior, in some situations its influence on the criminal behavior of certain persons can be studied (Димовски, 2012, стр. 265). It is interesting to point out that 90% of minors confirmed that the media has a negative influence on their behavior. Likewise, a group of juveniles arrested for committing a robbery claimed to have been influenced by rap music broadcast on television. Based on the above mentioned, the question arises about imitating what is seen in the mass media. In this regard, a study conducted by Heller and Polsku from 1976 came to the result, based on interview of 100 young male criminals aged 16 to 27, that 22% of respondents reported attempting criminal techniques they have seen on television, while only 3% reported failure or arrest. A large percentage (22%) confirmed to think about committing crimes seen on television (Surette, 2002, p. 48). Likewise, Hagell and Newburn conducted research on the media habits of juvenile delinquents, comparing them to juvenile nondelinquents. They found that juvenile delinquents generally consumed the same television program as opposed to juvenile delinquents. However, they were also aware of the limitations of their research that they did not take as a sample juvenile delinquents who had committed more serious crimes, as well as that the key difference between juvenile delinquents and non-delinquents was in their lifestyle (Surette, 2002, p. 49). Criminologist Trott came to the conclusion that the combination of violence with funny cartoon characters leads to a greater tendency of children to apply violence in everyday life (Douglas, 2003, p. 5). Another study conducted in 1969 under the leadership of Senator John Pastore explains the existence of a cause-and-effect relationship between crime and violence on television and violence and antisocial behavior of individuals, especially children (Slotsve & et al, 2008, p. 25).

At the same time, the study conducted by Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder and Huesman, following a group of ten-year-old boys and girls, come to the conclusion that the best basis for anticipating aggressive behavior of boys is the amount of television programs with elements of violence (Slotsve & et al, 2008, p. 27). In his study in 1986, Leonard Eron explains that people who watched the most television programs and movies in childhood were later arrested or convicted of violent crime. Robinson and Bachman found a correlation between the number of hours spent in front of the television and the aggressive behavior of juvenile delinquents (Димовски, 2012, стр. 265-266).

In addition to the previously explained factors, also other social factors, such as neighborhood and delinquent groups, can influence the extent of crime. The influence of the neighborhood and delinquent groups is best evidenced by the attitude of Prof. Dimovski that they can be equated in their importance to the process of socialization with the family. Based on the above, the need and importance of studying the effect of these criminogenic factors on the commission

of murder is imposed (Димовски, 2012, стр. 268). As a result of socializing with antisocial personalities, who at the same time have a rich criminal career, the criminal socialization of young people occurs. In the event that the minor's relationship with delinquent groups is high, the greater is the chance that the minor will engage in delinquent behavior (Мирић, 2022, стр. 109). Worthy of mention is the longitudinal study from Montreal (Canada) which began in 1984. In the study 1037 students were monitored and the results showed that juvenile delinquents who were members of certain criminal groups committed more violent criminal acts than those juveniles who were not members of them. Based on the above, it can be concluded that early membership in delinquent groups is a significant factor in committing violent crimes (Lacourse & et al, 2003, p. 195). Neighborhoods and communities where many poor families live are characterized by violence and antisocial behavior. In his research, the criminologist Mennis came to the conclusion that the process of socialization of a child can be limited or improved by the characteristics of the community from which he/she comes, which indicates the importance of the neighborhood and delinquent groups (Mennis & et al, 2011, pp. 174–192). Criminologists McCord, Widom, and Crowell emphasized that living in a neighborhood with high levels of poverty and crime increases the risk of involvement in serious crime for all children who grow up there (McCord & et al, 2001, p. 89).

### **3. THE PERSONALITY OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT AS A FACTOR IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

After presenting the criminogenic factors related to the social environment, it is necessary to point out the most significant criminogenic factors related to the personality. Namely, criminogenic factors related to personality represent a special set of different personality characteristics, such as intelligence, character, temperament, emotions, motives, mental disorders, which contribute to the appearance of delinquent behavior of minors. The mentioned criminogenic factors can be observed together, but also individually. If we look at the mentioned criminogenic factors together, it is best to cite the research of married couple Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck. The two of them, in a study conducted during the fifties of the last century on a sample of 500 delinquents and 500 non-delinquents, came to the conclusion that juvenile delinquents are characterized by the following personal characteristics: self-confidence, defiance, impulsiveness, narcissism, suspiciousness, destructiveness, sadism, lack of empathy, extroversion, ambivalence, the existence of feelings of insignificance, mistrust, weak personality traits, mental instability, hostility, as well as resentment (Siegel & Welsh, 2010, p. 82).

In addition to the collective overview of criminogenic factors related to personality, it is possible to analyze the aforementioned factors individually. In this regard, we will analyze the correlation between intelligence and juvenile delinquency. Namely, the earliest studies on the level of intelligence of juvenile



delinquents show a low level of intelligence. So, for example, the criminologist Goodard, based on a sample of 200 juvenile delinquents, came to the conclusion that their level of intelligence was at the level of twelve-year-olds (Shulman, 1951, p. 768). At the same time, it should be mentioned the research according to which a sample of 1,731 juvenile delinquents, of which almost two thirds were male, found that their average level of intelligence was 84.45, which is below the average (Mann & Mann, 1939, pp. 351–360). Hirschi and Hindelang noted an 8-point difference in intelligence between juvenile delinquents and juvenile nondelinquents, noting that intelligence directly affects the amount of reward available to a child for school success. The consequence of lower IQ is that young people experience frustration at school, receive fewer rewards for good behavior and continue to engage in antisocial acts (Pandey & Kumari, 2018, p. 206). Further, in India during 2018 were obtained the results on a sample of 200 juveniles, half of whom broke the law, with juvenile delinquents divided into minor offenders (40), serious offenders (44) and very serious offenders (16). So Pandey and Kumari calculated that delinquents from all groups, compared to juveniles who are not delinquent, have a lower level of intelligence (Pandey & Kumari, 2018, pp. 207-208).

Character, as the next trait, was the subject of study by numerous criminologists through the prism of juvenile delinquency. Namely, the criminologist John and his colleagues concluded on the basis of a study from 1994 that delinquent boys more often have low conscientiousness. Other studies have shown that low conscientiousness is significantly associated with juvenile vandalism and theft and the number of arrests (Sumithra & Komalavalli, 2022, p. 6.258). Bullying behavior is characterized by traits such as hostility, selfishness, self-centeredness, malice, jealousy, and indifference (Malik & et al, 2018, p. 1). A study on the individual characteristics of juvenile delinquents in Fujian Province, China on a sample of 621 delinquents aged 13-19, including a control group of 1,371 students, showed that for delinquents aged 16-19, the scores for extroversion, psychosomatics and nervousness were significantly higher than in the control group, while in delinquent women the nervousness score was lower than in the control group. Likewise, for male delinquents aged 13-15 years, the scores of psychosomatic and nervous conditions were significantly higher than in the control group (Li & et al, 1999, p. 211). Worth mentioning is a study on a sample of 102 juvenile delinquents (92 boys, 10 girls) who served a sentence in a juvenile prison in Navarra, Spain from 2000 to 2014. On that occasion, among other things, the personality of juvenile delinquents was studied, and it was concluded that juveniles are characterized by a high degree of aggression, disobedience, egoism, social insensitivity, a tendency to abuse psychoactive substances, impulsivity, anxiety and submissiveness (Cacho & et al, 2020, p. 72).

Temperament is the next criminogenic factor related to personality. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the existence of a connection between a certain type of temperament and juvenile delinquency. However, one should be careful with the claim that a specific temperament causes criminal and delinquent behavior, because temperament must be viewed through the totality of

the action of other criminogenic factors. The famous criminologist Eusemck claimed that extraverted individuals are more inclined to commit criminal acts (Gungea & et al, 2017, p. 44). In this regard, it should be mentioned the research of Jouhki from 2015, which observed a positive relationship between extroversion and criminal behavior in a sample of 4,855 ninth-grade students in Finland, where the degree of agreeable behavior is low. Similar results were obtained in Romania where 130 juvenile delinquents placed in a suitable institution have significantly lower ratings for agreeableness and higher for extraversion compared to 136 students enrolled in five schools in the same district (Ciurbea & et al, 2022, p. 246). At the same time, a study conducted by criminologists Samitha and Sreedevi during 2019 on a sample of thirty juvenile delinquents, who stayed in a home for boys' observation in India, found that the majority of juvenile delinquent boys were highly extroverted with the existence of antagonism. Namely, as many as 77% of juvenile delinquents are extroverts, which means that they are talkative, full of energy, enthusiastic, eager for attention, dominant and open. The existence of antagonism suggests that most juvenile delinquents are eager to prove themselves right, while being rude and untrustworthy. The remaining 23% were introverts. They are reserved, quiet, inhibited, withdrawn and complacent (Samhitha & Sreedevi, 2019, pp. 21-22).

Emotion is defined by Keltner and Shiota as a functional reaction to an external stimulating event, temporarily integrating a physiological, cognitive, phenomenological, and behavioral network to facilitate an environment-shaping response to the situation. Adolescence is accompanied by numerous physical, psychological and social changes, which result in new emotional excitements. One of the consequences is that adolescents experience more frequent and intense emotions than other categories of the population. Numerous studies have pointed to the connection between certain emotions and delinquent behavior. Namely, the criminologist Moretti together with his colleagues discovered that negative self-identities are a clear indicator of aggressive behavior in adolescents. At the same time, a whole series of criminologists, such as Frankel and Muatt in a 1996 study, Capaldi and Stoolmiller in a 1999 study, Sutherland and Shepherd in a 2002 study, Barru, Frick and Killian in a 2003 study and Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, and Caspi in a 2005 study concluded that low self-esteem is associated with externalizing behavior, conduct problems, and reactive aggressive behavior in children. Similarly, Simmons, Paternite and Shore pointed out that in case there is a higher degree of self-esteem, we have a lower degree of aggression and prosocial behavior (Aucoin, 2006, pp. 7-12). It is important to mention the research by Kimonis and colleagues from 2007 on a sample of 88 detained minors with an average age of 15.57 years. Based on this research, it was concluded that the predictor of aggression is a lack of guilt and empathy, i.e. poverty in emotional expression (Moskat & Sorensen, 2012, p. 8).

In order to find out additional information about the motives of juvenile delinquents, we can cite a study conducted by Yuliu Maluushin from the Department of Psychology of the Kurgan State University in Russia. She investigated minors, aiming to establish their criminal motivation. The total sample

consisted of 3,400 students aged 14 to 17 who are at risk of being involved in criminal activities. On that occasion, it was determined that 472 students (13.8%) are minors with a stable criminal motive, that is, with a tendency to commit a criminal act. Among the dominant motives are the motive generated by immoral hypertrophied needs, the motive of self-affirmation, and the aggressive motive. At the same time, 508 persons (14.9%) were found with a tendency towards criminal activities. Likewise, special attention was paid to minors who were suspected of having committed various criminal acts. The sample included 540 persons, including 210 girls (38.9%) and 330 boys (61.1%), whereby minors were divided into three groups: 1) minors suspected of committing violent crimes, 2) minors suspected of commission of criminal acts of a mercenary-violent character and 3) minors suspected of committing criminal acts for profit. Based on the obtained results, among minors from the first group, an aggressive motive and an immoral motive predominate, with the satisfaction of the following needs reported: antisocial physical aggression, destruction, negativity towards others, antisocial autonomy, some signs of dominance, the need for recognition and self-affirmation from other people, the need to satisfy sexual wishes. In the second group of juvenile delinquents, the predominant motives are aggressive, immoral, emotional and self-affirmation motives. For the sake of personal affirmation and freedom from emotional stress, minors commit criminal acts, causing damage to the physical and psychological integrity of other persons and stealing property. In the last group of minors, there is a motive of self-affirmation, as well as a feeling of fear, anxiety, dissatisfaction with oneself, a certain tension and a feeling of confusion. (Malyushina, 2020, pp. 503-504).

The last criminogenic factor, which will be the subject of our interest, is mental illness of minors. Although the lay public is of the opinion that the problematic behavior of minors is only a passing phase in their development, one should be extremely careful, because adult perpetrators of criminal acts are "recruited" from minor delinquents, and one fact is particularly dangerous. Namely, according to the 2017 Report of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the US Department of Justice, almost 70% of juveniles who commit criminal behavior have at least one diagnosed mental illness, among which anxiety or depressive disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, behavior or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Additional concern is the fact that among minors who have a diagnosable mental health disorder, more than 60% have been shown to have disorders due to the use of psychoactive substances at a young age (Danielle Rousseau, 2023). In accordance with that, the rate of mental illness in juvenile delinquents is significantly higher compared to juveniles who do not commit criminal acts. In order to determine the share of certain mental illnesses among minors, approximately 15% to 30% have a diagnosis of depression or dysthymia (pervasive depressive disorder), 13% to 30% have a diagnosis of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, 3% to 7% has a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, and from 11% to 32% has a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. At the same time, a depressed mood is often accompanied by irritability, which

increases the risk of a minor behaving aggressively. If a minor is already in an institution, the risk is increased not only for conflicts with others, but also for self-harm. The risk of aggressive behavior is further increased due to the existence of specific disorders and comorbid disorders because emotional symptoms (anger) and self-regulation symptoms (impulsivity) tend to increase the risk. The existence of anxiety disorders results in less aggressive behavior, with the exception of post-traumatic stress disorder, because such minors tend to react aggressively and unexpectedly to perceived threats (Underwood & Washington, 2016, p. 231).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the above explained, the complexity of causality in juvenile delinquency is obvious. In relation to the criminality of adults, special criminogenic factors act in the case of minors, leading to the commission of criminal acts. Therefore, the conclusion is that an effective fight against juvenile delinquency requires the contribution of all state bodies that include minors in their work description, along with constant innovation of measures to fight against this form of crime. Only in this way is it possible to succeed in preventing juvenile delinquents from continuing to commit criminal acts after reaching adulthood.

In the end, we would encourage academics to conduct research on juvenile delinquency, given that the aforementioned data on the causation of illegal behavior among minors refer mainly to foreign research. If a criminological study were conducted with a sample related to juvenile delinquency in the Republic of Serbia, it would be possible to find out some specificity of this phenomenon in our country, and therefore to adapt prevention measures.

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