



## Delinquency – A Contemporary Global Problem

Adriana Iulian STANCU<sup>1</sup>

Mihaela AGHENITEI<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** With regard to the process of globalization - at least in the current phase - the shortcomings consist in the fact that, in addition to cutting-edge technology with its benefits, globalization carries with it a certain indifference to the stage of development of the areas and countries where it enters, deepening the gaps. At the same time, it promotes, with or without permission, especially through the media, crime, violence, promiscuity and the exacerbation of sex. In this way, the values of democracy and, above all, the formation of human behaviors are affected. Information networks, ultra-sophisticated communication channels, the Internet, with its wide availability and audience, ease of use and cost efficiency, induce, beyond the undeniable technical performances, a mediocre mass culture, a prefabricated, standardized, simulated and narcotic culture, expressed, mainly imagistic, far from artistic thrill, from human sensibility, in general, and from the system of traditional values. Methods: communication, education, cultivating respect for social values. Result: carrying out effective activities to prevent and eradicate delinquent phenomena requires, first of all, thorough knowledge of the causes that generated them, the research of which is also the basic objective of this article.

**Keywords:** globalization; development; human behaviors; delinquent phenomena; values

<sup>1</sup> Senior Lecturer, PhD, Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences, “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati, Romania, Address: 111 Domneasca Str., Galati 800201, Romania, E-mail: [Adriana.tudorache@ugal.ro](mailto:Adriana.tudorache@ugal.ro).

<sup>2</sup> Senior Lecturer, PhD, Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences, “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati, Romania, Address: 111 Domneasca Str., Galati 800201, Romania, E-mail: [mihaela.ghenitei@ugal.ro](mailto:mihaela.ghenitei@ugal.ro).



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors.  
Open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

## **1. Introduction**

Contemporary society is increasingly concerned with the issue of delinquency, justice in general, and juvenile justice. Despite the numerous efforts to reduce the phenomenon of criminality or to exercise control over it, in the last decades it has gained momentum. What has been said represents a characteristic finding for most countries, including Romania, where crimes committed by children currently constitute about 10% of the total number of registered crimes.

The notion of delinquency expresses the violation of legal norms of a criminal nature by which the most important values and social relations are protected. Deviance has an extremely vast content. In the broadest, generally accepted sense, it means atypical behavior, a departure from the standard position. There is a positive deviance - it has, as a rule, a favorable influence on order and invention and a negative one - it has unfavorable ends, being oriented against the values of a social group. social; for example, innovation. Delinquency is a form of negative social deviance, often defined by the term's criminality and criminality. Regarding the term juvenile delinquency, there are several opinions in the specialized literature. According to our legislation, a juvenile delinquent is a person between the ages of 14-18 who has committed a crime or an action liable to punishment. We mention, however, that the category of juvenile delinquency sometimes includes young people over 18 years of age, who display deviant behavior from the norms of social coexistence.

## **2. Body of Paper**

Carrying out effective activities to prevent and eradicate delinquent phenomena requires, first, thorough knowledge of the causes that generated them, the research of which is also the basic objective of this article.

Referring to the characteristic of delinquent behavior, we note from the start that this is a complex phenomenon, including multiple dimensions of a statistical, legal, sociological, psychological, welfare of social assistance, prospective, economic and cultural nature: the statistical dimension characterizes the state and dynamics delinquency in time and space; the legal dimension highlights the type of legal norms violated by antisocial acts and deeds, their dangerousness, the damages caused, the type of sanctions expected for delinquent persons; the sociological dimension is centered on the identification of the causes of crimes and crimes, on the development and promotion of preventive measures; the psychological dimension refers to the personality structure of the individual in conflict with the law, the motivation for committing the crime, the attitude of the delinquent towards the committed act like responsibility, discernment, etc.; the assistance dimension - of

social assistance - emphasizes, in particular, the methods of resocialization and reintegration of people who commit crimes, of "humanizing" justice, by promoting alternative forms of detention, etc.; the economic dimension highlights the so-called cost of crime, the direct and indirect consequences of delinquency from a material and moral point of view; the prospective dimension aims at the evolution trends of delinquency, as well as the propensity towards delinquency of certain individuals and social groups.

The review of these dimensions attests to the interdisciplinary nature of the delinquency phenomenon, which makes it extremely difficult to approach and study the set of crimes produced in a society and their causes, requiring the involvement of specialists from the most diverse fields: sociology, law, social assistance, psychology, medicine, etc.

From a multidisciplinary perspective, the etiology of juvenile delinquency can be studied both as an individual act and as a social phenomenon, these two fields intermingling, but at the same time maintaining a relative independence.

As an individual act, the problem of causes, generating factors of delinquent behavior found its explanation in two large groups of theories:

- constitutional theories, according to which delinquency is an innate phenomenon, so it originates in the individual himself, in biological and genetic factors.
- theories of the social environment, which consider delinquency an exclusive product of the influence of the external environment on personality formation.

The constitutional theories, in turn, can also be divided into two groups.

The first group includes the theories that give a determining role to internal (endogenous) factors, "criminal heredity". From the well-known thesis of C. Lombroso, according to which many crimes are biological and hereditary in nature, several theories were inspired, among which:

- Goring's heredity theory, according to which social behavior is an inherited behavior. So, Goring states that 68% of the offspring of criminals become criminals themselves - <https://www.qdidactic.com/sanatate-sport/psihologie/criminalistica/orientarea-biologica556.php>. In this way, he replaces the theory of the born criminal with the theory of heredity.
- the theory of the genealogical tree, which tries to prove that in families whose descendants had criminal antecedents there is a greater number of criminals. Thus, the American Goddard, studying the descendants of a Dutch fisherman over several generations, from two marriages: the first - with a woman from a criminal background, the second - with a virtuous woman, establishes that those

children who became delinquents came from the fisherman's first marriage. (Goddard,1921).

- the theory of twins, elaborated by Lange and Christiansen (Stănoiu, 2006) in "Crime as a destiny" - <https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/genetic-explanations-of-offending-behaviour>, which tries to demonstrate that the hereditary predisposition to commit a criminal act is, in the case of monozygotic twins, a very strong factor. (Stănoiu, 1995)

At the end of the last century, they studied several almost four thousand twins regarding the incidence of criminal behavior, finding that if one of the twins is involved in a criminal act, his brother, a university student, will be a criminal with a probability of 35%, and in the case when he is not, they are identical twins - with the probability of 12%.

- the theory of adopted children, inserted in some more recent studies, seeks to establish a correlation between the delinquent behavior of some adopted children and the behavior of the biological parents. Thus, it was found that certain predispositions inherited from biological parents can increase the probability that their descendants, adopted by other families, will become criminals. (Stanişor, 2003).

The second group of constitutional theories does not deny the importance of heredity, biological and genetic factors, but attributes to them an indirect role in committing the delinquent (criminal) act. Most of these theories designate particularities of the personality structure as predisposing factors to delinquency, such as:

- the reduced intellectual capacities of the individual - mental retardation, weakness, mediocrity.
- temperamental traits. According to the opinions of several specialists, the choleric and melancholic temperament favors developments towards deviance, while the phlegmatic and sanguine one establishes multiple obstacles to the internalization of predeviant or deviant behavior models.
- disorders of a psychopathological nature - mentally deficient children, neurotic children, with frequent depressive states, impulsive children, with frequent bouts of aggression, etc.

These are just some of the particularities of the personality structure that carry a risk of openness to delinquency. Specialists in the genesis of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency are unanimous in giving special importance to subjective factors, that is, those related to the child's personality. Neglecting the psychological and biological characteristics of man means not considering the human being, it means depersonalizing the entire process of emergence and structuring of deviant

behaviors. At the same time, it is necessary to mention that the structures acquired by an individual both biologically and psychiatrically cannot have a criminogenic importance by themselves, cannot inevitably transform this individual into a criminal, just as there is not a guarantee that a perfectly healthy individual will never come into conflict with the law. However, it is necessary to recognize another scientific truth: heredity cannot be dissociated from the influence of the environment, of external factors, of what we call the world surrounding everyone. Personality is the result of the permanent interaction between the individual (through his hereditary data) and this external world. (Morris, Perry, 2016)

The influence of the external environment in the formation of the delinquent personality of the minor finds concrete expression in the influence of 1) the inevitable environment; 2) casual environment; 3) the chosen or accepted environment and 4) the imposed environment.

By ineluctable environment is meant that environment without which the existence of the individual cannot be conceived in general. It is, first, the family environment of origin and the one that forms the habitat and the neighborhood. (Junger-Tas, Ribeaud, Cruyff, 2004).

The family represents the first environment, in which the child's socialization takes place - the "seven" years at home, this process developing depending on the relationships it has with the mother, father, brothers, sisters and other members in the case of the family. As for the contemporary family, it is necessary to mention that it is gradually losing its status as a social institution, its structure is falling apart, and by weakening the parents' interest and control over the children's concerns, its educational function is diminished. With reference to families from the country, this situation is mainly caused by her poor material condition. The number of families in disadvantaged and stressful conditions is constantly increasing. The uncertainty of tomorrow creates tensions and quarrels between parents, between parents and children, which often requires children to escape from the family home and seek to solve their problems in the street group, between occasional friends. However, these cases carry serious risks engaging in antisocial acts - thefts, beatings, etc. Making a small generalization of the factors with significant behavioral risk at the family level, among the most frequently encountered in the period we are going through we can name: dismemberment of the family like through the death of a parent, divorce or family abandonment; abandonment of children by parents - in many cases right from birth; adoptions; the subsequent restoration of the family home - parents living in cohabitation, step-parents, adoptive parents; temporary absence of a parent like prison or long-term hospitalization; chronically ill, alcoholic, morally degenerate or aggressive parents; the number of children in the family - if there are several children, the older ones feel the "dethronement complex" in favor of the youngest; if

there is only one child, he often becomes a "problem child" etc. (Steketee, Junger, Junger-Tas, 2013).

Certain family dysfunctions, potentially generating behavioral deviations in the child, were also noticed in normally close-knit families. Among them can be mentioned:

- the divergence of educational methods applied by parents, especially in terms of rewarding and sanctioning children - the child is permanently confused.
- the hyper protective attitude of the parents - leads to the irritation of the child.
- indifferent family attitude - develops latent aggression.
- the hyper authoritarian attitude of the parents - creates states of tension in the child that can later manifest in discharges at the expense of other people (Petcu, 1999).

Many parents do not realize how important it is, starting from the first year of the child's life, to establish intense emotional bonds with him, to identify and encourage the child's sensory and knowledge projects and experiences. According to medical studies, the child's relationship with the mother during the first 9-12 months of life is very important for the child. He, not yet having his own personality, feels the need to identify with the person next to him. That is why, for the pregnant woman, who has to serve a prison sentence, protection measures are provided in various legislations: either to allow her to give birth to the child and to raise it in the penitentiary, with her, until the age for 3 years like in Spain, Albania, etc., or to raise the child at home for a period of 1 year - interruption of the sentence - in Romanian legislation, etc. (Daigle, Cullen, Wright, 2007).

It is also demonstrated that, starting from the 3rd year of life, the child sees his father as the authority in the family and, as a result, assimilates this external behavior. The tendency to imitate the behavior of family members - parents, siblings is so strong in the child, that delinquent or immoral parents will necessarily exert a harmful influence on the minor. More changes in the life or structure of the family of origin - abandonment at birth, separation of the child from the mother, absence of the father, divorce, lack of care, quarrels, etc., usually result in a lack of affection for the child. (Stănișor, 2003). Various research demonstrates, however, that the "lack of affectivity" suffered by some delinquents during their childhood had for them a determining role in the formation of behavior. Thus, investigating this problem, sociologist David Popenoe (USA)-(Pearstein, 2011), concludes that "the decline occurred following the absence of the father" in the family led in the USA to the increase of juvenile violent crime 6 times - from 16 thousand arrested in 1960 to 96 thousand in 1992; suicide among young people has tripled; drug abuse and alcohol consumption continued to have a high rate; the number of pregnant teenage girls has increased, etc. A series of alarming trends associated with the disorganized

family are also presented by Mitchell Pearlstein, who states that "70% of children in state institutions come from families without parents or with a single parent", that "60% of American rapists grew up in homes without father", that "80% of adolescents in psychiatric hospitals come from broken families", that "three out of four youth suicides occur in homes where a parent is missing" and that "72% of adolescent criminals grew up without a father". (Whitehead et co., 1999).

From the mentioned, it becomes clear that to develop an effective program of measures for prevention or protection of minors, it is necessary to know all the disturbances at the family level.

The importance of habitat and neighborhood in the etiology of juvenile delinquency is revealed both by sociological studies and by statistics on the origin of delinquents. From these studies we learn, for example, that the majority of juvenile delinquents live in collective buildings or blocks, in famous neighborhoods, with a low standard of living and only a small part of them live in individual buildings and come from well-structured families (Svensson, 2004).

Urbanization has led to an increase in crime in cities, to its unequal distribution within cities, to the creation of so-called delinquency zones, which represent areas of material and socio-moral deterioration for the individuals who live there. The domiciles of juvenile delinquents are concentrated, as a rule, in certain disadvantaged neighborhoods. Researching this problem, R. Gassin identifies some particularities of urban environments that constitute important aspects of their influence on the formation of the juvenile delinquent's personality:

- the latent opposition shown to the social system. (Rhoades, Leve, Mark Chamberlain, 2016).
- the difficult adaptation of minors born in these environments to the true values of a normal social life.
- fueling the phenomenon of adolescent gangs by associating young people for different reasons: affective, for self-affirmation, justifications, etc. (Gassin, 1990).

Of increased importance for the formation of the personality of minors is also the casual environment or entourage. As numerous studies tell us, many minors commit criminal acts or adopt an antisocial lifestyle under the harmful influence of those they meet. (Piquero, Gover, McDonald, Piquero, 2005).

Some authors include in the casual environment and school as one of the most serious forms of maladjustment. J. Leaute shows, for example, that school maladjustment can constitute the initial stage of an individual social maladjustment. (Leaute, 1972).

As is known, the school is a socializing microenvironment of essential importance in the formation of the child's personality. At the same time, school represents for any minor the first external environment that forces him to adapt to rules of conduct in which sanctions are applied by an authority other than the family. (Stanisor, 2003). The crisis that contemporary school systems are going through in many respects: overcrowding of classes, discontinuity in education, poor adaptation of the content of the subjects studied, as well as of the methods to the needs of young people, insufficient training of the teaching staff, lack of staff, poor discipline, etc., combined with emotional or educational deficiencies in the family can easily cause school failure. In turn, school failure is an important factor of social maladjustment, of deviant behavior. Thus, the studies carried out in this field by Heuyer (France) demonstrated that 65% of delinquent minors subjected to research had substantial school delays. Also, the investigations carried out by the Gluecks in the USA on a sample of about 1000 minors showed that delinquents differed from non-delinquents in terms of their intellectual level, the amount of reading done, a school delay of at least one year for the group of delinquents (Stanisor, 2003).

Referring to Romania, we mention that school failure is accompanied by frequent phenomena of absenteeism and school dropout. According to the data of the Department of Statistics and Sociology, in the school year 2003 - 2004, more than 5 thousand children aged 7 - 16 did not go to school. The increase in the number of children out of school or who drop out of school, especially in the case of primary and secondary school students, also favors marginalization and juvenile delinquency. These are also confirmed by some reports of the Department of Penitentiary Institutions, from which we learn that "in detention centers there are minors who do not know the alphabet", that "most detained children have not graduated at least eight grades, and some of them have never stepped on the threshold of school".

The research of many delinquents allowed us to notice the fact that the chosen or accepted environment served as the cause of such behavior for many of them, which primarily refers to the personal, professional, and extra-professional environment. Or, the lack of housing, a stable relationship with the partner, marital conflicts, etc. or the lack of a balanced personal environment, as well as a professional (workplace, etc.) and extra-professional - places frequented during free time, represent factors that can lead to the commission of crimes, criminality.

In the context of what has been exposed, it is hard to imagine that the professional environment can be a generator of crime. However, the fact is well argued back in 1974 by C.D. Bryant in his work "Deviant behavior. Occupational and organizational bases". (Bryant, 1974). And today no one doubts the fact that businessmen or those who work in the field of finance, in the desire to get rich quickly, commit crimes.



Among the multiple factors that can negatively influence the formation of minors' behavior, the studies on juvenile delinquency also list permissiveness, the lack of social control over the places frequented by minors: bars, restaurants, discotheques, game rooms, etc.

Among the factors favoring delinquent behaviors, a special place belongs to the imposed environment. By imposed environment we mean the places, specially designed and managed by the state, where people who commit crimes of a certain gravity are held to serve their sentence - penitentiaries, re-education centers, etc. Most specialized studies mention that the punishment with deprivation of liberty does not always achieve the purpose in which it is applied, that the penitentiary is, as a rule, a criminogenic environment. What was said refers especially to the cases when a long-term punishment is applied, its effect being precisely described by Michel Foucault, who mentioned that (Foucault, 1997):

- prisons do not reduce the crime rate; no matter how hard we try to expand, multiply or improve prisons, the number of crimes and criminals remains constant or, even worse, it grows.
- detention causes recidivism, because after delinquents leave prison, they have more chances to return to it again. - Studies carried out in Romania in this field demonstrate that about 40% of minors who have served their sentence in prisons relapse.
- the prison manufactures delinquents through the way of existence it imposes on the inmates.
- prison favors the growth of an environment of delinquents, in solidarity with each other, hierarchical, ready for all kinds of future complicity.
- the conditions that await released prisoners upon release from prison fatally condemn them to recidivism. - Minors resort to recidivism because society does not accept them, marginalizes them. Thus, in Romania, although the Law on the social adaptation of persons released from detention has been in force for 6 years, it is not respected. In the situation where the state does not provide a place to live and work for these minors, all they must do is resort to illegality again.
- prisons produce delinquents indirectly, leaving the prisoner's family prey to misery.

It is important to take these moments into account, especially in the case of first-time offenders who end up in prison for the first time and who have not committed serious crimes, applying alternative forms to prison as a more effective way, which provide for the serving of the sentence at liberty, they are being supervised by the probation/social reintegration counselor. In the context of what has been said, there

is a need to reduce the number of (minor) crimes for which minors are liable to prison terms. It is known that the first months of detention represent the hardest period for a convict. After that, the habit intervenes, and from here to the criminogenic effect of the penitentiary is only a step.

From the above we can conclude that the criminal personality, like the non-criminal one, is formed in the same spheres of social life: family, school, professional environment, entourage, etc. However, due to interpersonal relationships, certain particularities will determine the evolution of the personality in different ways. Researched from the perspective of the individual approach, as insisted in psychological theories, juvenile delinquency appears to us as the result of the young person's inability to adapt to the living conditions offered by society and to the normative requirements, an inability determined by psychological peculiarities, psychopathological disorders, caused by several factors, the family having the most important role.

Another way of approaching the etiology of juvenile delinquency was proposed by sociological conceptions, which make the tendency towards delinquency dependent not so much on the psychological characteristics of the individual, but, above all, on the specifics of the social and cultural environment. In the context of these opinions, juvenile delinquency is not just an individual act. It can also be seen as a social phenomenon, obeying the laws of development of the social formation that generated it. From this perspective, the individual causes of juvenile delinquency give way to the causality of the system.

Here it is necessary to mention that criminality is not the product of some society depending on ideology or other political criteria. It is specific to the entire human society, and we find it in all types of society with the appearance of criminal law norms. At the same time, we notice the fact that together with the political changes that occur in a society or in a group of countries, because of wars, important changes also occur in the structure of crime, including juvenile delinquency. For example, the post-war period is a period of accumulation of several types of juvenile crime in which property crimes - theft, etc. predominate and the emergence of youth gangs - the 1950s in France, England, the USA, Russia etc.

With the fall of the totalitarian regimes, multiple transformations occurred in the structure of juvenile delinquency in the former socialist countries. Thus, if previously in these countries certain types of juvenile delinquency were almost unknown: drug-related crimes, juvenile prostitution, human trafficking, the phenomenon of street children, etc., then the transition period generated a whole series of mutations in the structure of crime. In this period, "criminality represents the phenomenon where the strength of the old regime is manifested most prominently with the weaknesses of the transition period, thus producing a

dangerous convergence between the traditional risk factors and the new factors that favor crime". (Stănoiu, 1994).

There are also frequent cases when certain characteristics of the political situation in some countries are at the origin of some forms of crime, including juvenile ones, related to this situation. For example, multiple terrorist activities, executions, torture, hostage-taking, hijacking of planes, etc., at in which many minors participate, can be justified by certain political options. The use of minors in the illegal transport of weapons in conflict zones, in solving inter-ethnic conflicts, etc., is also a reality. Currently, juvenile delinquency shows significant quantitative increases from the perspective of multiplying its serious forms.

The research of juvenile delinquency as a social phenomenon in multiple studies carried out internationally reflects the fact that one of the main factors generating such behaviors is the amplification of chronic poverty trends. There is a direct link between the crime rate and the percentage of children living below the subsistence minimum. For example, in the USA 60% of children from single-parent families live below the subsistence minimum, compared to 17% of children living with both parents. In Norway, which has a lower crime rate, only 4% of children live below the subsistence minimum.

Although poverty, as such, cannot be considered a direct cause of the increase in juvenile crime and delinquency trends, it is largely responsible for the way families raise their children and the risks that exist in terms of the use of illegitimate means in solving problems. Poverty feeds, for the most part, the phenomenon of "street children", and this, in turn, largely determines the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency.

In Romania, poverty primarily affected families with two or more children. Economic difficulties often force parents to neglect their children, not supervise them, mistreat them, not provide them with a proper education. As a result, the number of socially maladjusted children increases, as well as those who run away from the family, completing the number of delinquents.

Lacking economic support and the support of their partner, more and more mothers abandon their children in maternity hospitals or children's homes. Upon reaching the age of 18, the child leaves the institution of protection without a profession, without any support from the state. The only solution left for such a child is anchoring in street groups and delinquent gangs.

The growing number of parents who take care of one or more children alone is another reason for the increase in juvenile delinquency. In Romania, in 1999 there were 117,000 single-parent families (10% of the total number of families in the country) in which 9,427 children were educated. Currently, the number of single-

parent families represents 28% of the total number of families. The largest category of single-parent families is those resulting from divorce and from the birth of an illegitimate child by teenage mothers. As a rule, these families are the most prone to material and psychosocial problems. Today, about 250,000 children are educated by a single parent, and 25,000 children are left in the total care of their grandparents or other people, the main cause of this situation being the parents' departure to work abroad to ensure their minimum subsistence. (Stănoiu, 1994). However, it would be more correct to say that the decisive element is low income and not being a single parent. It is certain that a much larger number of children coming from low-income families can be estimated because the main supporter is a single parent. At the same time, it is known that there are also many single-parent families that are financially secure, possessing a favorable psychological atmosphere that does not create impediments in the formation of a healthy personality. However, the position of a single parent does not necessarily determine low incomes. Thus, lately births out of wedlock in Denmark (44% of all births) and in Sweden (50%) constitute a tradition, and the support given by the state to unmarried mothers in these countries is so extensive that they, in the majority, they do not have low incomes, although they raise and educate their children without a father. If these policies promoted in the Scandinavian countries were also taken over by Romania, the single parent situation would certainly be less burdensome, and the approximately 25% of children born out of wedlock (2004) would not constitute such a frequent source of supplementing the number of children in residential institutions, as well as groups of delinquents.

Unemployment, intrinsically linked to the level of economic development, has serious influences on juvenile delinquency. Unemployment has criminogenic effects both at the individual level and at the social level. At the individual level, unemployment can determine an increased risk for crime, especially if it affects both parents. In these families, the possibility of minor children to commit criminal acts is much greater.

Unemployment can also have criminogenic effects at the social, collective level, especially in localities where massive layoffs have taken place, because of economic restructuring (Poland, Romania, Russia, etc., after the fall of totalitarian regimes). Juvenile crime can be encouraged not only by the lack, but also by the abundance of consumer goods both quantitatively and qualitatively, the subjects of criminal acts not necessarily being children from disadvantaged families. Thus, the possibilities offered by the development of technology, in general, and computing technology create additional temptations even for some very intellectually gifted minors who come from organized families. In recent years, the cases in which minors are counterfeiters of money with the help of color copiers, illegal users of credit cards, creators of sites through which goods are "sold" with advance payment and other aspects related to "cyber-criminality".

Among the macrosocial factors that favor the phenomenon of delinquency, an important role belongs to the urban environment. Juvenile delinquency can be considered a predominantly urban problem. As already mentioned, the uneven development, marked, on the one hand, by the existence of well-equipped neighborhoods with all the necessary services, and, on the other hand, by those that represent areas of poverty lacking the necessary infrastructure, creates in young people a feeling of dissatisfaction, frustration, social injustice, which sometimes generates delinquent manifestations such as collective vandalism, etc. The first empirical studies regarding the explanation of the spatial distribution of criminals were developed at the University of Chicago.

Urbanization and industrialization also lead to a decline in the traditional mechanisms of social control over the behavior of young people. In urban industrial regimes, the relationships or social contacts between individuals are more superficial. Under these conditions, unofficial sanctions lose their effectiveness. Thus, in a "nuclear" family living in a big city, the parents are often too busy to supervise or properly care for their children, who can often be exposed to external, criminogenic influences.

On the other hand, city dwellers do not have close ties even with their neighbors, so that urban communities become more and more disorganized. The urban environment is also characterized by greater freedom of conduct, unlike the rural one, where the family and neighbors have a power of censorship that imposes rigorous behavior on young people.

Of course, the mentioned cannot be extended to the rural environment without certain reservations. As for the Romanian village, we can say that currently the traditional mechanisms of social control over the youth are in a process of progressive diminution. The rural areas of our republic today represent a sad reality of the economic and social crisis, with poor people and, for the most part, abandoned by the active population. However, urbanization and rural exodus create favorable conditions for delinquency by reducing the socialization and control functions of the community, which leads to the abandonment of traditions, moral norms, etc.

The research of juvenile delinquency as a social phenomenon also allowed to discover the direct connection between its high rate in certain geographical areas (countries, regions, cities or neighborhoods) and the level of culture. A series of sociological studies found that in most cases young criminals had a below-average level of education. Many authors believe that juvenile crime is an expression of the individual's inadaptation to a certain system of sociomoral values, establishing certain relationships between ethnic type and crime or between immigration and crime. The group of theories that relate the personality of the individual to the culture in which it develops is included in the culturalist trend. (Gassin, 1990).

One of the most well-known theories of the culturalist current is the theory of differential associations, proposed by the American criminologist E.A. Sutherland, which represents an application of the theory of "social learning"<sup>1</sup>

According to this theory, criminal behavior is not hereditary, but learned during informal communication between individuals. The learning of criminal behavior depends on the ratio that exists within the group between interpretations favorable to respect for the criminal law and interpretations unfavorable to it. Hence the name differential association theory. Sutherland points out that the earlier the association with criminal patterns, the learning occurs faster. However, this theory finds partial validity in the field of juvenile delinquency, since during gradual socialization, even if young people assimilate and internalize the social demands and prohibitions transmitted by family and school, they can learn certain behaviors deviants within the street or group of friends.

Another important culturalist theory is that of "culture conflicts", developed by Thorsten Sellin, which regards crime and crime as consequences of conflicts with cultural differences between different categories and social groups. (Sims, 2003). He reveals the fact that the phenomenon of delinquency is much more frequent in immigrant communities, especially among minors from the second generation of immigrants. Crime is the result of the conflict that occurs in the same society between different norms of conduct. T. Sellin states that the number of conflicts between a group's values and legal norms is directly proportional to the delinquency rate. Of course, culture conflict is not sufficient by itself to explain variations in crime rates. It must be placed in the wider context of social and economic factors in society.

Developing the ideas presented above, A.K. Cohen formulated the theory of delinquent subcultures, which enjoyed great success between 1956 and 1965. He starts from the difference in social, economic, and cultural status that separates classes and social groups in North American society. (Cohen, 1955). Thus, concerned with the problem of the appearance of the delinquent subculture among the disadvantaged class, Cohen explains the socialization process that takes place in the family and because of which children internalize traditional behavioural models. The conflict arises starting with the entry of the minor into the school environment, where the assessment of behaviour is done according to middle class standards. Children who belong to disadvantaged classes, due to cultural and educational barriers, experience a permanent feeling of isolation, dissatisfaction, and frustration. As a result, these minors, attracted by the middle-class lifestyle, will abandon their environment and resort to undesirable means to achieve their goals. In this way, they become potential social sources of criminality. However, we also mention here

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://psihologiaartasistiinta.blogspot.com/2013/09/teorii-ale-comportamentului\\_14.html](http://psihologiaartasistiinta.blogspot.com/2013/09/teorii-ale-comportamentului_14.html) accessed on 11.11.2022

that the cultural factor cannot be separated from the diversity of social, economic, political, etc. factors. in determining delinquent behaviour.

From what has been reported, we can say with certainty that the phenomenon of deviance, including that of delinquency, is much more frequent in contemporary societies than in traditional ones. There are multiple explanations for this situation. More consistent, however, seem to be the opinions that attribute the main role in amplifying the deviant tendencies to the processes of change and modernization. As the Romanian sociologist Sorin M. Rădulescu mentions, "especially the effervescence eras characterized by profound contradictions and social transformations know an increased extent of deviance". conflicts, manifestations of normative disorder. (Rădulescu, 1994).

### **3. Conclusions**

However, the structural transformations, initiated after 1989, in the political, economic, and social life of Romania, generated, in turn with some beneficial effects, also significant normative disturbances resulting in the appearance of a state of anomie, people no longer having clear benchmarks to be guided by This state has caused and will cause, if it is maintained, phenomena of crisis, criminality and social pathology.

From the analysis undertaken, it follows that two somewhat different styles of discipline could lead to one antisocial behavior, namely the careless, unconstrained style, and the severe but inconsistent style, in which applies unpredictably, randomly and arbitrarily sanctions to the child. Parental affection plays and she plays an important role. Thus, in general, the absence of parental affection, the rejection of children by parents or ignoring them, the lack of minimum time spent together (parents - children), are all considered as being predictive of delinquent behavior, both self-reported and officially recorded.

All the above shows the special importance of the family in the process of formation of behavioral skills starting with childhood and continuing with an adolescence, periods in which the minor's attitude towards the norms of social coexistence is also formed, as and respect for them. The single-parent or divided family was the object of study to identify the antisocial behavior of children from such social environments, and it was considered that this variable is a favorable factor for justifying the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency.

#### 4. Acknowledgment

This paper is financed from the funds of the research project carried out by the University "Dunărea de Jos" from Galati, financing contract no. 14713/10.05.2022.

#### 5. References

- Bryant, C. D. (Ed.). (1974). *Deviant behavior: Occupational and organizational base*. UK: Taylor&Francis, 1974, pp. 109-128.
- Bulgaru, M.; Bulgaru, O. (2004). Characteristics of demographic and family behaviors in the Republic of Moldova. *Scientific Annals of the State University of Moldova. Series "Sociohumanistic Sciences"*. Volume III. -Chisinau: CEP USM, pp. 392-396.
- Cohen A.K. (1955). *Delinquent Boys*, Glencoe, Ill: Free Press.
- Dafoe, Whitehead, Barbara & Popenoe, David (1999). *Why Wed? Young Adults Talk About Sex, Love and First Unions*. New Brunswick: National Marriage Project, Rutgers University.
- Daigle, Leah E.; Cullen, Francis T.; Wright, John Paul (July 2007). Gender Differences in the Predictors of Juvenile Delinquency. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*. 5 (3): 254-286. doi:10.1177/1541204007301289. ISSN 1541-2040. S2CID 144071237.
- Foucault, Michel (1997). *To supervise and punish. The birth of the prison*. Bucharest: Humanitas, p. 387.
- Gassin, Raymond (1990). *Criminology*. Paris: Dalloz, pp. 360, 362, 444.
- Goddard, H.H. (1921). *Juvenile Delinquency*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.
- Goring, C. in <https://www.qdidactic.com/sanatate-sport/psihologie/criminalistica/orientarea-biologica556.php>.
- Junger-Tas, Josine; Ribeaud, Denis; Cruyff, Maarten J. L. F. (July 2004). Juvenile Delinquency and Gender. *European Journal of Criminology*. 1 (3): 333-375. doi:10.1177/1477370804044007. ISSN 1477-3708. S2CID 145375000.
- Leaute, Jacques (1972). *Criminology and penitentiary science*. Paris: PUF, pp. 569-570.
- Morris, Edward W. & Perry, Brea L. (2016-02-01). The Punishment Gap: School Suspension and Racial Disparities in Achievement. *Social Problems*. 63 (1): 68-86. doi:10.1093/socpro/spv026. ISSN 0037-7791.
- Pearlstein, M. (2011). *Broken Bonds: What Family Fragmentation Means for America's Future*. NY: New York Time.
- Petcu, M. (1999). *Delinquency. Psychosocial milestones*. Cluj-Napoca.
- Piquero, Nicole Leeper; Gover, Angela R.; MacDonald, John M.; Piquero, Alex R. (March 2005). The Influence of Delinquen Peers on Delinquency. *Youth & Society*. 36 (3): 251-275. doi:10.1177/0044118x04265652. ISSN 0044-118X. S2CID 144907955.
- Popenoe, D. (2018). *Process of Aging: Social and Psychological Perspectives*. London: Routledge.



Radulescu. Sorin M. (1994). *Sociological theories in the field of deviance and social problems.* – Bucharest, p. 7.

Rhoades, Kimberly A.; Leve, Leslie D.; Eddy, J. Mark; Chamberlain, Patricia (December 2016). Predicting the transition from juvenile delinquency to adult criminality: Gender-specific influences in two high-risk samples: Recidivism from adolescence to adulthood. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health.* 26 (5): 336–351. doi:10.1002/cbm.1957. PMC 4624625. PMID 25916547.

Sims, Barbara (2003). Sellin, Johan Thorsten (1896–1994). *Encyclopedia of Juveniles Justice.* doi:10.4135/9781412950640. ISBN 9780761923589. Retrieved July 1, 2023.

Stanisor, Emilian (2003). *Juvenile delinquency.* Bucharest, p. 47.

Stanoiu, R. M. (1994). *Transition and crime.* Bucharest: Oscar Print.

Stanoiu, R.M. (1995). *Criminology.* Vol. 1. Bucharest: Ed. Didactica si Pedagogica, p. 140.

Stănoiu, R.M. (2006). *Criminology and Penology.* Bucharest: Oscar Print.

Steketee, Majone; Junger, Marianne; Junger-Tas, Josine (2013-01-20). Sex Differences in the Predictors of Juvenile Delinquency. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice.* 29 (1): 88–105. doi:10.1177/1043986212470888. ISSN 1043-9862. S2CID 143911396.

Svensson, Robert (October 2004). Shame as a Consequence of the Parent-Child Relationship. *European Journal of Criminology.* 1 (4): 477–504. doi:10.1177/1477370804045692. ISSN 1477-3708. S2CID 145803713.