

# THE PHENOMENA OF SOCIAL PATHOLOGY AMONG MINORS WITHIN THE PERIOD OF 1999–2012 AS A RESULT OF FAMILY DYSFUNCTION

Zjawiska patologii społecznej wśród nieletnich  
w latach 1999–2012 jako wynik dysfunkcji rodziny

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## SUMMARY

Over the last decade, the crime rate among young people has been rising, which may be caused by the growing dysfunctionality of the family. The aim of this work is to show the range of juvenile crime in recent years and the way in which the dysfunctionality of the family influences this phenomenon. To analyze the phenomenon of juvenile crime, the statistics of the Regional Police Headquarters in Opole in years 1999–2012 have been used. The analysis of the statistics has shown that over these years, the crime rate among young people has been rising and in 2012 it reaches 8.4% of

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all crimes. It is becoming apparent that the dysfunctionality of modern family influences the development of crime among young people. Modern dysfunctionality is not understood merely as orphanhood or half-orphanhood but more as a deep crisis of educational family values. What has been disturbed is the structure of families without considering it just at the level of parents' physical presence at home but at the level of bonds, goals, norms which family should bring while shaping a young person, citizen and which it currently develops.

## STRESZCZENIE

W ostatniej dekadzie wzrasta poziom przestępczości wśród młodych ludzi, co może być spowodowane narastającą dysfunkcyjnością rodziny. Celem niniejszej pracy jest wskazanie zakresu przestępczości nieletnich w ostatnich latach i wpływu, jaki na to zjawisko ma dysfunkcyjność współczesnej rodziny. Do analizy zjawiska przestępczości wśród nieletnich wykorzystano statystyki Komendy Wojewódzkiej Policji z lat 1999–2012. Z analizy danych statystycznych wynika, że w wybranym okresie wzrasta poziom przestępczości wśród młodych ludzi, który w roku 2012 sięga 8,4% wszystkich przestępstw. Widoczne staje się, że dysfunkcyjność

**Słowa kluczowe:** patologia, nieletni, dysfunkcja

współczesnej rodziny ma wpływ na rozwój przestępczości wśród młodych ludzi. Przedstawione dane pokazują, jak bardzo negatywny wpływ ma rozkład rodziny i jej wartości wśród młodych ludzi. Współczesna dysfunkcyjność nie jest już rozumiana jako sieroctwo czy półsieroctwo, ale jako głęboki kryzys wartości wychowawczych rodziny. Zaburzona została struktura rodzin, nie rozpatrując już tego zjawiska na poziomie fizycznej obecności rodziców w domu, ale na poziomie więzi, celów i norm, jakie współczesna rodzina powinna wносить i kształtować w młodym człowieku, obywatelu, a jakie obecnie rozwija.

## Background

In modern world, it is easy to notice a growing problem of the social maladjustment of children and youth at school age. Different signs of social maladjustment lead to the rise in criminal behavior among young people, linked to aggression and reaction to various addictions. It is caused by the civilizational development of the society and the problems arising from it on the global scale [1].

Behavior disorders of children and youth, in most cases, are the effect of a prolonged process of progressing demoralization. The lack of an appropriate educational intervention or its ineffectiveness may eventually result in criminal behaviors, which are the most extreme form of social pathology.

By the year, it is easy to notice the higher percentage of juvenile crimes as compared to the general amount of crimes. Juvenile crime is becoming a civilizational problem of our times. The issues connected with juvenile crimes are very topical and concentrate on many areas of every day life of individuals. A very important part of the demoralization of young people is the effect of the disintegration of family and its value on a progressing process of pathologization, which is happening at an alarming rate [1].

## The role of the family in child's upbringing

The role of the family in child's upbringing is perceived in two ways: 1) the role which family plays being a fundamental link which raises a child not only for its own sake but also for the whole society, in its name and under its control 2) the role which family plays in shaping an individual character of its members, especially children and youth [2].

While considering the influence of family in educational shaping of child's character and an existing relation between the educational effects and the factors rooted in the family, most researchers put a top priority on the feature of family life which can be called "an emotional bond of child with its family" [3]. Among human's different needs we can distinguish two most vital and wanted categories of need: biological needs and psychological needs. The fulfillment of biological needs is an integral basis conditioning the biological development of an individual and it simultaneously enables the creation of higher level needs. The fulfillment of psychological needs conditions the social development of the individual, leading to maturing and becoming an adult person [4]. A lot of research prove that there is a minimal number of human's needs which must be fulfilled, among which the need of safety and the need of love are most frequently listed. This is why the role of family in child's life is so important [5].

In local environment, together with dynamic socio-economic changes and emigration for financial reasons, the picture of a single-parent family is being created, without the full support of both parents, carrying the pathological risks for the family environment. The emigration results in the breaking of family and social ties in family and local environment [6].

On the basis of police data we can distinguish the dangers of our interest, assess the phenomenon of crime over the period of a given time.

In order to do that, for the purposes of this article, we will use the statistical data of chosen categories of crimes committed by juveniles and adults in Poland, which can be found in the archives of Regional Police Headquarters in Opole. The data used in this work have been provided by this unit in the form of annual statistical reports.

## The structure of the juvenile and adult crime

The term "crime" in criminology stands for the set of actions prohibited by the law, under threat of punishment, which actions were committed on a given area of territory at a given time [7].

Police statistics showing the level of juvenile crime describe only the cases in which the culprits were found and usually no one is capable of estimating the size of the so called "dark number" of the cases dismissed due to the lack of finding the culprit. Certain percentage of the number is the effect of the criminal activities of juveniles. The number of culprits and the criminal acts committed by them, established by the police in Poland are shown in the table 1.

**Table 1.** The number of criminal acts and the established juvenile culprits of crimes in years 1999–2012

Years	Committed crimes	Established culprits
1999	70 245	52 674
2000	76 442	56 345
2001	69 366	54 026
2002	63 317	48 560
2003	63 239	46 798
2004	70 107	51 411
2005	71 482	50 974
2006	77 515	53 782
2007	75 476	54 747
2008	74 219	52 081
2009	85 020	50 872
2010	99 187	51 162
2011	101 026	49 654
2012	94 186	43 847

Source: Own study based on the statistical data of Regional Police Headquarters in Opole, included in the Police Information System in years 1999–2012.

On the basis of the data in table 1, a conclusion can be drawn that the biggest amount of crimes were committed by the juveniles under 17 in the year 2011. The year 2012 is in the third place when we consider the amount of committed crimes comparing to other years in the table 1, but when it comes to young people, the number of established crimes decreased to the lowest level in the whole analyzed time span. It is a very significant information for all the institutions which deal with the problem of prevention of these negative phenomena of increasing crime and social pathology in juvenile environment. It is also a very significant signal for the government institutions so that they can initiate far-reaching preventive and educational actions. The analysis of data based on the 2013 report of the

Regional Police Headquarters in Opole also describes the breakdown of juvenile crime in different categories and its dynamics over the span of seven years [8]. The data is presented in table 2.

In the recent years in Poland an increase in established crimes has been observed. In the years 1999–2000 the number of punishable acts among juveniles increased, in the years 2001–2003, the juvenile crime slightly decreased but in the following years it reached the numbers bigger than in 1999. In the year 2012, there was an increase in the number of crimes connected with

damage to health, participation in scuffles and rapes. The number of thefts, burglaries, robberies and man-slaughters decreased.

The punishable deeds committed by the juveniles decreased until the year 2003, but they increased in the years 2004–2005. What is more, until the year 2003 we can also notice a percentage drop in the participation of juveniles in all categories of crimes. In next years (2009–2010) there was a slight increase in the participation of juveniles in all categories of crimes but in the following years the numbers decreased noticeably.

**Table 2.** The kinds of crimes committed by juveniles by categories in years 1999–2012

Rok	Kind of crime					
	Manslaughter	Damage to health	Participation in battery or scuffle	Burglary	Theft, robbery	Rape
1999	28	2 943	1 571	11 104	24 847	137
2000	19	3 256	1 782	12 900	23 069	191
2001	20	2 853	1 727	10 838	16 814	166
2002	21	2 877	1 697	9 537	13 704	118
2003	7	2 835	1 923	9 472	11 238	237
2004	11	3 260	2 175	9 558	10 989	95
2005	11	3 016	2 147	8 081	11 052	116
2006	19	3 429	2 696	9 419	8 154	148
2007	11	3 534	2 958	9 185	7 511	126
2008	9	3 384	3 242	8 229	8 161	92
2009	14	4 636	3 039	8 546	9 121	137
2010	7	5 591	3 158	9 813	11 547	311
2011	6	5 496	3 580	9 329	12 438	126
2012	4	4 109	3 289	7 796	12 237	181

Source: Own study based on the statistical data of Regional Police Headquarters in Opole, included in the Police Information System in years 1999–2012

**Table 3.** The juvenile crime in Poland in years 1999–2012

Year	CR	IM	ES	CU	LP	RITS
	General number of reported crimes	Punishable acts of juveniles	% of juvenile participation	General number of suspects	Juvenile delinquents	% participation of juveniles
1999	1 121 545	70 245	6.2	364 272	52 674	14.4
2000	1 266 910	76 442	6.0	405 275	56 345	13.9
2001	1 390 089	69 366	5.0	533 943	54 026	10.1
2002	1 404 229	63 317	4.5	552 301	48 560	8.7
2003	1 466 643	63 239	4.3	557 224	46 798	8.4
2004	1 461 217	70 107	4.8	578 059	51 411	8.8
2005	1 379 962	71 482	5.1	594 088	50 974	8.6
2006	1 287 918	77 515	6.0	587 959	53 782	9.1
2007	1 152 993	75 476	6.3	540 605	54 747	10.1
2008	1 108 057	74 219	7.8	516 626	52 081	11.3
2009	1 129 577	85 020	7.5	521 699	50 872	9.7
2010	1 138 523	99 187	8.7	516 152	51 162	9.9
2011	1 159 554	101 026	8.7	504 403	49 654	9.8
2012	1 119 803	94 186	8.4	500 539	43 847	8.8

Source: Own study based on the statistical data of Regional Police Headquarters in Opole, included in the Police Information System in years 1999–2012



## Discussion

The most common crimes among the juveniles are the crimes against the property such as: thefts, burglaries, robbery and extortion. Robberies are usually characterized by a significant degree of brutality, aggressiveness connected with the ruthlessness in culprit's actions. The most shocking offences committed by the juvenile delinquents are crimes, manslaughter and manslaughters with extreme cruelty, rapes committed on adolescents and adults. More and more frequently the juveniles are the culprits in batteries and scuffles, it is a very common type of crime which spreads in juvenile environments. Another common phenomenon in modern times are the acts of hooliganism at the stadiums during mass musical and sports events.

The lack of a proper supervision in the family, especially in the pathological family, gives the foundation for the formation of informal groups both at school and outside of school. The groups, under the strong leadership, are organized into juvenile gangs, transform-

ing into crime groups, in which the violence is created, expressed in physical and mental bullying of weaker members of the group. It leads to a complete submission and carrying out the instructions of the stronger, which is usually the main cause of smoking cigarettes, drug abuse and alcohol drinking.

## Conclusions

On the basis of statistical data of the years 1999–2012 it can be concluded that the number of juvenile crimes has been increasing over the years. In my opinion, the first step towards decreasing the number of juvenile crimes should be the repairing of modern families so that they could carry out their educational functions among children, passing on the values and establishing the positive role models. Strong family will enable children to fulfill their emotional needs and as a result it will build a strong unit, which will not be so easily influenced by the demoralization processes and the pathology that comes along.

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