

**TRANSFORMATION OF FACTORS AND MECHANISMS
OF INVOLVEMENT OF JUVENILES IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY:
KAZAKHSTAN EXPERIENCE AGAINST THE BACKDROP
OF FOREIGN PRACTICE**

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Abstract

The purpose of the work is to identify factors influencing changes in the criminological portrait of a juvenile offender, features of its changes, as well as modern trends shaping the personality of a juvenile offender. The study gives reason to say that risk factors for involvement in criminal activity as a separate type of criminogenic factors have not undergone radical changes. The work gives reason to assume that with the development of ICT and communication at a distance, influence of the peer group and the role of hierarchy in the juvenile delinquency may be weakened. In addition, there still exist a problem associated with the lack of terminology, methods for assessing the personality of a juvenile cybercriminal, as well as the very definition of the juvenile cybercriminal concept. The results of the study can be used to develop strategies and measures to prevent and combat juvenile delinquency.

Keywords

Criminogenic Factors, Cybercrime, Delinquency, Juveniles, Risk Factors

I. Introduction

The study of juvenile delinquency is of constant interest to criminological researchers. The development of information and communication technologies and the emergence of

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new types of legal relations associated with this have a tangible impact on children (adolescents), to one degree or another transforming their behavioral stereotypes and views on the concepts of lawful/illicit behavior, deviance, and delinquency (Goldson, 2018; Gungea et al., 2017). When discussing juvenile delinquency, attention is paid to age trends, moral development, as well as the continuity and course of antisocial behavior. They are influenced directly or indirectly by various trends, including societal and familial shifts (Gungea et al., 2017). At the same time, with the development of information and communication technologies (ICT), there appear the new sources of influence on the personality of adolescents (new means of web-communication, social networks etc.), forming new features of the psychological portrait (personality traits) of the latter. Teenagers today inhabit a constantly shifting information space, which frequently has negative effects on them. The processes of informatization, digital transformation, ICT development along with globalization processes, as well as the emergence of new cultural determinants, including moral and value aspects, lead to the formation of a new information socio-cultural space in which upbringing as a pedagogical component is gradually disappearing, becoming, perhaps, the exclusive prerogative of the educator, school teacher (Alqodsi and Gura, 2023; Batysheva, 2021). This presents numerous challenges to formal and informal social relations regulators. Juvenile citizens are primarily adolescents who are engaged in active socialisation, assimilation of norms, values, and conduct rules within the context of coexistence in society on various levels (Filippova and Zhurkina, 2022). When discussing juvenile delinquency, emphasis is placed on age-specific trends, moral development, and the persistence and progression of anti-social behaviour. Besides, they are directly or indirectly influenced by various trends, including changes in society and family (Gungea et al., 2017).

It is worth noting that juvenile offenders are consistently identified as having a significantly higher prevalence and severity of mental disorders than the general juvenile population (Young et al., 2017). Understanding the reasons and motivations behind juvenile delinquent behaviour has taken much time and effort on the part of juvenile justice (Matveeva et al., 2019). Many young offenders are victims with complex needs who need the help of medicine, social service agencies, and a balance of welfare and justice models to get back into society and be productive members of it. To meet all the needs of young people involved in or on the verge of delinquency, however, there is a lack of skilled labour and a shaky and insufficient legal framework globally (Young et al., 2017).

In addition to the general elements, the subject of proof in criminal cases involving juvenile defendants has special elements. The juvenile's age, circumstances of birth and upbringing, level of intellectual, volitional, and mental development, personality traits and temperament, needs and interests, and the impact of adults or other juveniles on the juvenile are all factors that must be made clear (Ganchevski et al., 2015).

The factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency are numerous and complicated. They include psychological and social conditions and circumstances that, in concert, create the propensity for unlawful (illegal) behaviour in minors. The origins of criminogenic factors in the juvenile environment include dysfunctional families, social adaptation difficulties in the learning community, and differences in the perception of social justice between

social groups. Studying the root causes of crime and delinquency with an eye toward precautionary and preventative interventions is a crucial topic of research in this field.

Studies of the criminological aspects of juvenile involvement in crime have recently concentrated on topics like the analysis of the impact of children's social skills training on antisocial development (Beelmann and Lösel, 2021), the study of criminogenic factors influencing the activity of juvenile citizens (Batysheva, 2021), the criminological characteristics of juvenile aggression (Petechel et al., 2019), the psychosocial profile of juvenile offenders (Mittal et al., 2021), juvenile crime in the European Union after the financial crisis (Torres-Tellez, 2020), cyber delinquency of juveniles (Patel, 2019; Rokven et al., 2018), personality traits of juvenile offenders (Asscher et al., 2016; Sumithra and Komalavalli, 2022), juvenile delinquency, social welfare, justice and therapeutic interventions from an international perspective (US Department of Justice, 2019).

Currently, juvenile delinquency continues to cause concern and motivated fears in the society of different countries despite the changing nature of these crimes. In the context of transformation of methods and tools for committing such offenses, the psychological portrait of the offender changes as well. This leaves its mark on techniques and methods for preventing delinquency among underage, requiring their adaptation to new challenges. This question is inherent both for Kazakhstan and many other countries of the world.

Current study is aimed at analyzing the criminological aspects of the involvement of minors in criminal activities and is intended to contribute to the existing literature devoted to the study of the personality of a juvenile offender. The research question involves assessing the current state and prospects for the transformation of factors involving young people in criminal activity and the risks associated with it, factors influencing the change in the criminological portrait of a juvenile offender. This issue is considered in the context of studying the experience of Kazakhstan.

Theoretical Context and Review of Sources

The study of the factors influencing the change in the mechanisms of involvement of juveniles in criminal activity, the personality traits of a juvenile offender, the features of its change, as well as current trends that shape the personality of a juvenile offender, is of a rather specific interdisciplinary nature, requiring expert knowledge in the field of criminology, sociology and psychology. From the point of view of criminal law, it is not difficult to identify new methods, tools for committing crimes, to develop tactics for countering and combating new types of crimes in which juveniles are involved. However, to determine the change in the motives that prompt the juvenile to commit illegal acts, the identification of the factors influencing these motives is a more difficult task, since these changes and factors are less obvious. At the same time, it cannot be denied that a change in the personality traits of a juvenile delinquent is an indicator of certain processes in society. And if we take into account the fact that such an impact exists, then at least it is possible to determine the degree of this impact. However, at present, this issue is often undeservedly left aside. Over the past decades, in relevant studies related to the object of this work, there have been considered such issues as the features of the etiology and phenomenology of juvenile delinquency (Međedović, 2021), the role of bystanders and enablers in the context of the study of

juvenile delinquency (Ibrahim et al., 2020), human rights and youth justice in United Kingdom (Case and Haines, 2021; Cunneen et al., 2018), problems of marginalisation, mattering and violence between young people (Billingham and Irwin-Rogers, 2021), rights of the child in the child justice system (Kilkelly and Pleysier, 2023), underage and the challenges, posed by cybercrime (Yar, 2018), analysis and comparison of personality traits of juvenile offenders, committing traditional offenses and cybercriminals (Rokven et al., 2018), studying the impact of maternal employment on juvenile delinquency (Pickett, 2017), studying the transformation of motives of juvenile delinquents (Erofeeva et al., 2019), empathy as a mediator of the link between emotional intelligence and aggression in juvenile delinquents and non-offenders (Riasat et al., 2017).

As can be noted, often young offenders are victims with complex needs, and for re-socialization and active interaction with society, they require active participation from medicine, social assistance authorities, while respect for the rights of minors remains an important issue. When choosing the tactics of combating juvenile delinquency, law enforcement agencies, judicial authorities must take into account the special legal and psycho-emotional status of minors, proceed from their priority of protecting their rights, as a particularly vulnerable social stratum. The rights of the child and his special legal status must be implemented through the effective functioning of social and legal guarantees and the effective functioning of internal organs. In terms of protecting the rights of children and the juvenile justice system in many countries, there is a problem of discrepancy between the rights declared by law and the rights actually realized, which is initially observed in the field of juvenile justice, which considers minors as vulnerable subjects of law (Bazemore et al., 2005; Elis, 2005; Piacentini et al., 2011). It is believed that it is at the moment of transition from childhood to adulthood that a child raises his expectations from “adult” life (Baldry et al., 2019).

The issues of understanding or changing the views of young people on such concepts as “legality”, “lawful behavior” in adolescence is of particular interest, since this is a period of development when people begin to consider society and its institutions as adults, to go beyond the closed systems of the family and school, consider laws and regulations in different social contexts, where their relevance is more integrated with the adult world (Piquero et al., 2005; Rysina, 2014). Compliance with the law and understanding of one’s role in the system of state and law depend on the child’s cognitive maturation and psychosocial development (Tisdall and Kay, 2015). In this regard, the child develops his orientation towards the law (the rule of law) and the legal authorities at an early age, and early orientation shapes the behavior of both adolescents and adults (Fagan and Tyler, 2005). In addition to psychosocial reasons, the pedagogical background in the field of juvenile justice should also be taken into account (Rysina, 2014). Ultimately, as it can be noted, the processes of globalization, the development of information and communication technologies, along with informatization and related changes in society, give rise to a number of new challenges for criminology. Against this background, the category of young people (juveniles, underage) is the indicator that shows all the advantages and disadvantages of these processes in the world and society.

Research Methodology

The study is based on the method of content analysis, through which the paper examines the transformation of certain criminological aspects of juvenile delinquent personality and the factors influencing this transformation, in particular the risk factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. The study examines societal trends at the moment, including how ICT is evolving as a factor in delinquency, as well as many external factors that influence adolescent delinquent behaviour.

To identify current trends in juvenile delinquency, a systematic review of scientific research concerning the criminological portrait of a juvenile delinquent (personality traits) and criminogenic factors influencing the formation of a delinquent personality was carried out in this paper. Different theoretical approaches were looked at, and as a result, the approaches and methods of different schools of criminology were explained. These issues are addressed in the context of researching Kazakhstan's experience. Consideration of the experience of foreign countries presented in this work (including the USA, Australia, etc.) is due to the availability of relevant research on the topic of current work and the emphasized relevance of the issue of adolescent delinquency for these countries.

Taking into account the interdisciplinary specifics of the object of study, the methodology of this work involves a review of relevant studies on changing trends in juvenile delinquency, an analysis of the generalization of existing views on certain criminological aspects and risk factors that affect the involvement of minors in criminal activities. Based on the aims and object of the study, initially the paper highlights issues related to the so-called "traditional" factors influencing the formation of the personality of a juvenile offender with a further transition to the analysis of new factors that have appeared relatively recently, influencing the motives for involving a minor in criminal (illegal) activities and his personality traits. Considering the relevance of the problems defining the study subject, as well as the availability of relevant statistical and analytical data, the time frame of this study covers an approximate time period of 10 years (from 2012 to 2023). Methodological limitations of the work are associated with limited access to analytical materials from law enforcement agencies on juvenile delinquency, many of which are not publicly available.

The documentary basis for this study consists of UN documents in the field of juvenile justice (United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency), US Department of Justice reports and analytical documents (Comprehensive Cyber Review), US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Education for Youth Under Formal Supervision of the Juvenile Justice System, Report), and a policy brief by the National Conference of State Legislatures (Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice).

II. Results and Discussion

Changing Mechanisms of Involvement of Juveniles in Criminal Activity in the International Context

Juvenile delinquency is a proxy for the social climate of the state and society. Generally speaking, the rise in juvenile delinquency is a sign of unfavourable conditions in the nation, the region, and the social group (Asscher et al., 2016). Analysis of juvenile delinquency as a criminological category is, on the one hand, a way to find the causes of crime in society and, on the other hand, a way to study and predict changes in the structure and nature of crime in general. In the meantime, this category is an independent criminological problem because it differs qualitatively and quantitatively from crime among adults. This is due to the age of criminals, which is not only characterised by several socio-psychological characteristics, but also by their legal status in society (Zainetdinova and Rezyapov, 2020). Concerning the conditionality, difference, and specificity of minors' unlawful and antisocial behaviour, as well as the significance of studying this phenomenon, it should be noted that many criminogenic factors that have a decisive negative impact on adult offenders originate precisely in childhood, and adolescence (Zainetdinova and Rezyapov, 2020). The risk of delinquent behaviour in juveniles is associated with some psychological characteristics of juveniles, such as increased suggestibility, a lower threshold of criticality in their perception of their behaviour, and so on. The risk can later be transformed into a criminogenic factor, which is a social phenomenon that leads to criminal behaviour.

Risk factors are a subtype of criminogenic factors. In a broad sense, a risk factor is a trait, a variable, or a possible threat that makes it more likely that a person will deviate from the norm, which can lead to unlawful acts. Modern research is largely in agreement that delinquency risk factors manifesting at a young age predict a higher likelihood of delinquency later in life (Shader, 2001). The foundation of a criminal personality's criminal-legal qualities is made up of risk factors that contribute to delinquency as well as the motivations and mechanisms of a person's involvement in criminal activity. The latter is quite difficult to study from the perspective of criminology since there is no specific setting and consistency to study this issue (Didyk, 2017).

Offender criminal characteristics are related to legal categories such as type of crime, complicity, recidivism, nature and degree of public danger, and punishment measure. When making a list of criminal traits, it is assumed that the person did it on purpose. The reasons for the crime, the way it was set up, the person's qualifications, how professional they were, and the effects of the crime must be looked at. Establishing unbiased socio-psychological characteristics of the offender necessitates a thorough understanding of the mechanisms by which personality and environment interact, as well as the detection of unfavourable circumstances that have an impact on the development of the offender's personality. Meanwhile, the criminal-legal personality trait is an indicator that can be used to assess the public danger embodied in the committed malevolent act and reflected in the characteristics of the crime (socially dangerous consequences, causal link, etc.). Personality traits play a role in deciding the severity of punishment imposed by the law on a criminal (Didyk, 2017).

Criminal behaviour and delinquency are closely related concepts. Although many non-English-language sources use the word corresponding to the English “criminality” alongside “delinquency”, these concepts are usually equated in contemporary English-language studies of juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency is a term used in academic literature to describe a young person who has committed a criminal offence, though the exact definition varies depending on local jurisdictions. Although the precise causes of this variation are unclear, they may be connected to the absence of a globally accepted strategy (standard). In the legal and social sense, a delinquent is someone who has committed criminal offences (crime). However, delinquency encompasses a wide range of acts that are governed by legislation that varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and is subject to legislative change over time. While theft and violent acts are generally considered criminal offences, other acts, such as drinking in public places and sexual acts (in the realm of public morals), are treated with varying degrees of tolerance around the world (US Department of Justice, 2019). Delinquent behaviour goes hand in hand with deviant behaviour and shows up as an overall antisocial attitude and a tendency to break the rules of living with other people and commit offences (Matveeva et al., 2019).

At the macro level, the main causes of juvenile delinquency are general criminogenic factors, which result from severe social, economic (Shestak and Savenkova, 2023), political, moral, and psychological inconsistencies. These include social stratification, socioeconomic inequality, a lack of opportunities to genuinely meet physical and psychological needs, poverty, forced labour migration, family dissolution, etc. (Delcea et al., 2019).

Problems with social adaptation increased suggestibility, and opposition to social norms, laws, and rules are among the psychological traits that define juvenile offenders. They also highlight the lack of objectivity in the concept of moral values and their function in society, the emphasis on the quick gratification of impulsive needs, the rise in independence and egoism, the decline in empathy, etc. (Gungea et al., 2017; Steiner et al., 1999).

Several characteristics of adolescents can be identified based on the analysis and synthesis of data from research and analytical sources. These include the type of delinquent behaviour (covert or overt/obvious) as well as the risk factors that contribute to delinquent behaviour. Fraud, theft, vandalism, extortion, theft, and damage to private property are the most common forms of covert illegal behaviour by minors (Delcea et al., 2019). Bullying, intimidation, aggressive outbursts toward elders, physical harm, petty hooliganism, and cruel treatment of animals are common examples of overtly antisocial behaviour of minors who are aggressive toward others (Goldson, 2018; Gungea et al., 2017).

There is a variety of individual (internal) and external factors that are thought to increase the risk of juvenile delinquency in children. The impact of the social environment and issues with the social landscape are the main examples of external factors (causes). They include socioeconomic problems within the country or region, as well as issues concerning security, social welfare, well-being, and so on. This factor is frequently cited as one of the most important in studies (Delcea et al., 2019). The second external risk factor is the impact of media, the Internet, and social networks on children’s psyches and perceptions of reality in recent decades (Batysheva, 2021). The third factor is crisis phenomena and an unfavourable family microclimate. Family crises (quarrels, divorce, separate upbringing)

are also frequently cited as primary causes of delinquent behaviour. A young person's behaviour may change if they do not get enough attention and care from their parents, if the family has a negative psychological atmosphere, if they see their parents acting inappropriately if there is violence in the family, etc. (Goldson, 2018; Gungea et al., 2017). In addition to the above, other external risk factors for delinquent behaviour include conflicts with peers and teachers, as well as what the child thinks is unfair criticism from parents and teachers (Young and Giller, 2021). Negative attitudes to the law and rules of behaviour established in society (social group, collective); desire for strong emotions/impressions; cognitive abilities; lowered threshold of criticality in the perception of one's behaviour; emotional and psychological features associated with the ability/inability to control one's emotions (empathy, emotional intelligence), self-esteem, etc. are individual causes (factors) of delinquent behaviour (Young and Giller, 2021).

However, it is important to note that there are some types and forms of juvenile delinquency that are not as obvious as others. To investigate the risk factors that contribute to delinquency and other criminogenic factors, a separate strategy is required for these less obvious types and forms. Offences committed by immigrants and members of closed social groups (nomadic peoples, religious communities), offences related to organised crime, and offences committed by minors (under the age of 14) are a few examples of these types (De Leo, 1996).

Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that juvenile delinquency has been declining over the past decade (US Department of Justice, 2019, 2020). A global trend toward a decrease in juvenile delinquency seems to have emerged in recent years. According to UN data from 2004 to 2012 for a sample of 40 countries, there were fewer juvenile suspects (down from 10.9% to 9.2%) and juvenile offenders (down from 7.5% to 6%) (US Department of Justice, 2019).

According to a recent analysis by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the United States, the number of juvenile delinquency cases decreased by 56% between 2005 and 2019. The number of offences against people, property, public order, and drug trafficking has decreased when compared to previous years. The cases of offences showed the same 56% reduction rate based on the gender criterion. Approximately 53% of the 722,600 cases referred to juvenile courts in 2019 resulted in an admission of guilt, 19% in acquittal, and 28% in reconciliation. 3,300 cases involving offences, or 1% of all cases, were heard in criminal court. However, almost two-thirds of the young people found guilty received probationary sentences, while 27% and 8% of cases, respectively, involved freedom restrictions and other sanctions (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2022). Some European countries, particularly the Netherlands, Finland, and Switzerland, which have traditionally been considered to be countries with progressive social policies and high living standards, have shown signs of a downward trend in recent years. For instance, Finland is among the top countries in the world in terms of equality, consistent economic growth, and political stability, according to a variety of indicators. In the past few years, there have been some encouraging developments in the field of juvenile justice. For instance, rates of substance abuse, bullying, delinquency, crime, teenage pregnancy, and abortion have all decreased. In Finland, the age of criminal responsibility is 15, and there

are currently very few young people under the age of 18 incarcerated in any of the country's juvenile justice facilities. However, alarming increases of 30–40% in referrals to adolescent mental health services, mental health referrals to primary health care, and the proportion of children and adolescents receiving special educational support (Souverein et al., 2019) have been observed in recent years.

Combating juvenile delinquency and increasing the effectiveness of crime prevention among young people is a pressing issue in Kazakhstan and around the world (Antonova, 2020; Sadykova, 2020; Zhumabayeva et al., 2020). Priority one in the implementation of national youth policy is to establish the framework for young people's well-being from an early age. Kazakhstan exerts active effort to implement international standards for the treatment and prevention of juvenile delinquency (Ganchevski et al., 2015).

In the context of implementing youth policy measures, increasing the level of legal culture and developing countermeasures against socially negative phenomena among young people received special attention. Specifically, the Republic of Kazakhstan's Concept of State Youth Policy until 2020. In the document titled "Kazakhstan 2020: A Path to the Future", tasks were outlined to make sure all necessary steps are taken to enhance the legal system and increase public awareness of the law, counteract legal nihilism among young people, and introduce zero-tolerance standards for minor offences. Furthermore, the policy initiatives called for the improvement of the juvenile justice system, defining measures for juvenile delinquency prevention, rehabilitation, and, if necessary, reintegration into society (Antonova, 2020).

"Kazakhstan 2050: National Development Strategy" was an ambitious program announced by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2012. It focused on creating a more competitive, diversified and innovative country. This strategy highlighted key priorities for ensuring sustainable economic growth, such as industrialization, infrastructure modernization, education and health development, as well as youth policy issues, including aspects of combating juvenile crime. "Kazakhstan 2050" was part of the broader program "Kazakhstan 2030 Strategy", aimed at developing the country on a long-term basis. "It is obvious that only law-abiding citizens are capable of improving democracy and building a truly legal state," – the Concept states verbatim. Further the Strategy declares that "strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the law should become the life habit of young people. This is especially important at the stage when the younger generation is just developing the skills of 'adult' life. The growth of legal consciousness, the formation of respect for established rules and norms of behavior should become the object of special attention of all social institutions. The authority of the law must be firmly entrenched in the consciousness of Kazakhstan's youth as a basic value of the modern stage of development" (Zakimov et al., 2021). However, the strategy was not formally reflected in the adoption of certain legislative acts directly aimed at regulating public relations in this area.

Although there are no studies that verify or refute the efficacy of government policy in this regard at the moment, it is reasonable to assume that initiatives taken by the government have been successful. Analysis of statistical data shows that the number of all types of crimes committed by young people is going down steadily. According to an analysis of statistical data from the Committee for Legal Statistics and Special Accounts of the General

Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the number of crimes committed by juveniles in Kazakhstan decreased over three years (2012, 2013, 2014) (from 4,670 in 2012 to 3,558 in 2014) (Ganchevski et al., 2015). From 2019 to Q4 2022, there is a steady decrease in the rates of crime among young people (from 2276 registered crimes in 2019 to 1159 in 2022) (Portal of Legal Statistics and Special Accounts of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022). Positively, this trend is observed despite a rise in the total number of reported crimes in the nation, from 140,604 to 167,997, respectively (Portal of Legal Statistics and Special Accounts of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022).

At the same time, despite the general decrease in registered crime among underage in the state, there exist the high level of its latency. Latent crime is crime, information about which is not reflected in official reports. The structure of latent crime includes hidden and concealed crimes. Modern research notes that eyewitnesses and other persons who have information about the commission of a crime by an underage, as a rule, do not report to law enforcement agencies about the obvious fact of a crime or the fact having signs of a crime, perceiving them as a manifestation of mischief, immaturity, pranks (hooliganism, petty theft). In addition, the high latency of crimes committed by underage is explained by the fact that in many educational organizations there exist a practice of concealing facts of offenses by students (Antonova, 2020).

Although the country's leadership has made significant efforts to raise social welfare, living standards, and employment opportunities, it is important to note that there are still numerous challenges and barriers of an economic, cultural, professional, and personal nature. This poses additional risks to the growth and development potential of Kazakhstan's youth, as economic growth has slowed while the working-age population, which is primarily comprised of young people, continues to increase. Young people have fewer opportunities for social, professional, and personal growth as a result of the corruption, nepotism, and protectionism that are prevalent in state and society life. Due to their typical social activity, energy, and impatience, young people's environments may be more conducive to crime. In parallel, young people have a very high capacity for community self-organization and coordinated action, which frequently takes an illegal form. Young people are primarily the most frequent users of gadgets and other electronic communication tools. It is obvious in these situations that unrest, illiteracy, and disillusionment among young people make them easy targets for recruitment into a variety of illegal activities, including drug use, membership in gangs, or cybercrime.

Foreign experience plays an important role in the development and improvement of the juvenile justice system in Kazakhstan, but today there are very few initiatives in the country to exchange best practices, as well as expert support. However, it is important to consider that when accepting foreign experience, it is necessary to take into account cultural, social and legal features that may differ from country to country. In this regard, it is interesting to turn to the experience of European countries, especially countries that traditionally occupy leading positions in terms of living standards. It is worthwhile to highlight Switzerland's experience with juvenile justice policy. It can be assumed that the nation's high standard of living and social well-being plays a significant role in preventing (decreasing) juvenile delinquency despite the absence of explicit evidence to support this. In Switzerland, the

focus on juvenile delinquency is on the offender rather than the crime. Multiple parameters, such as developmental stage, personality, and psychosocial situation, are used to evaluate offenders. The age of criminal responsibility is among the youngest in Europe, at 10 years. However, the purpose of the juvenile justice system is not to exact revenge on juvenile offenders but rather to assist these individuals in becoming productive members of society. The Swiss system has many advantages, including institutions that are typically well-funded, interventions that are offered at all intensity levels, a psychotherapeutic approach that is widely available, and no distinction between placements in the civil and criminal justice systems. The country's efforts in this direction demonstrate a steady trend towards a decrease in adolescent delinquency in recent years, which gives grounds to consider the country's experience as best practice (Souverein et al., 2019).

In Australia, a downward trend in juvenile crime is observed. According to a 2018 study by the Australian Institute of Criminology, youth crime in New South Wales, which is the most populous state, has decreased much over the past 20 years. This is partly because young people spend more time at home online and less time with their friends outside. The study compared New South Wales Police data on crime rates among individuals aged 10 to 21 born in 1984 and 1994. The proportion of young people over the age of 21 who came into contact with the criminal justice system decreased by half, with particularly significant reductions in vehicle theft (-59%), property theft (-59%), and drink-driving (-49%), among the most common offences committed by young people (Payne et al., 2018). The study also concludes that spending more time online can help cut down on traditional crime, but it can also lead to new kinds of criminal activity. Because its effects on teenagers are not always clear to parents and authorities, the Internet is becoming a place where new kinds of crime can start (Payne et al., 2018).

The latter point is particularly important because it presents criminology with many brand-new difficulties if youth crime gradually migrates to the digital space. Specifically, the issue of developing a criminological profile (personality traits) of young cybercriminals (Maras, 2016). This issue has received little attention in recent studies. Furthermore, there are issues with terminology, methodologies for assessing juvenile cybercrime offenders, and a definition. In particular, it is unclear how such an offender should be addressed because the crime necessitates the appropriate legal classification and could involve various levels of dangerous illegal activity. Consequently, various types of liability are involved.

At the same time, modern research notes a number of additional procedural challenges associated with the emergence of cybercrimes among minors. The specificity of such calls is determined, first of all, by the need to have special knowledge – knowledge of computer technologies, the peculiarities of the functioning of mobile applications, etc. So, with the latter there is connected the specificity of investigative actions and skills necessary for investigators.

For example, when determining the circle of participants in an investigative action, it is important to take into account that witnesses must have the necessary basics of computer literacy and have the skills to work with computer equipment, programs, and network applications. At the same time, the participation of a teacher, translator (in some cases) and, if necessary, a highly specialized specialist is necessary to explain the content of the

minor's actions. As part of conducting a computer technical examination, investigators may have difficulties in asking the expert specific questions related to the functioning of computer systems, networks, individual computer and mobile applications, etc. The investigator's presence of special technical and theoretical knowledge in the field of computer technology, as well as practice in investigating categories of cases in the specialized field, can be a significant advantage in determining the methodology for investigating cybercrime among minors (Evseeva, 2019). These same problems, in essence, are characteristic of criminology. Traditional methods applicable in a number of criminological studies require adaptation to take into account the emergence of new types of crimes. When developing a methodological framework for criminological researchers in the field of juvenile cybercrime, it is important to consider the need for specialized knowledge in the field of ICT.

By analogy with "traditional" offences, it would be reasonable to define cybercrime categories and then classify specific acts according to the established categories. Nonetheless, due to their legal nature, some cybercrime offences may already be classified under existing categories of crimes. An example of a financial cybercrime is the embezzlement of money using computer technology. Financial cybercrimes are generally defined as non-violent economic acts frequently (but not always) committed for profit and frequently linked to "traditional" crimes like theft and fraud (Sturc et al., 2023).

Several case studies have proposed categorising Internet offences as either cyber-enabled or cyber-dependent (Council of Europe, 2001; Holt and Bossler, 2015; McGuire and Dowling, 2013). The former are traditional crimes, but the tool is ICT. Online extortion, fraud, and harassment (cyberstalking) are some of them. Cyberstalking refers to crimes committed solely through the use of ICT and that primarily target computer or network resources. This includes hacking, spreading viruses, and launching DDoS attacks (Rokven et al., 2018). Juvenile offences in this category typically involve deliberate acts with the intent to commit a crime. The way a specific malicious act is committed depends on many factors, including the age of the juvenile offender, his or her mental and physical development, social adaptation, lack of life experience, the presence and number of accomplices, including adults, as well as material and technical equipment. Cybercriminals, it has been noted, are incapable of making an unbiased evaluation of the damage they have caused. This prevents them from fully feeling any possible regret. The perpetrator of a cybercrime typically exhibits neither guilt nor fear of accountability, according to recent research (Evseeva, 2019).

Modern Features of Changing Mechanisms for Involving Minors in Criminal Activity

To summarise, the risk factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency have not changed significantly on a broad scale. The same factors still have an impact on how juvenile offenders form their personalities, despite the rapid development of ICT and the decline in teenagers' socialisation. These factors are classified as physical (social environment, media, and technology), socio-economic, and moral (Grudinin, 2016).

At the same time, it is important to note the possibility of changing factor of peers group influence and the need for acceptance on the formation of a juvenile's personality. With the growth of ICT and distance communication, the role of the team leader may become less

important. Herewith, juveniles may feel less pressure to conform when informal leaders do not “monopolize” power and control in the group. This can encourage adolescences to freely express their individuality and uniqueness, which in turn can positively impact their self-perception and/or independence in decision making. The collective hierarchy as well as the nature and structure of horizontal relationships may be impacted as a result. Perspectively the role of the collective as a risk factor for delinquency can be reduced.

According to earlier research, informal groups served as the primary foundation for juvenile and youth criminal organisations. Such processes are associated with adolescent psychiatric characteristics such as increased receptivity to suggestion and imitation, lack of emotional-volitional stability, group orientation, a predominance of the need for communication with peers and overestimation of the significance of their opinion or need for approval, and inability to evaluate their advantages and disadvantages critically (Karas, 2020).

Naturally, the age-specific characteristics listed above that are of interest to criminology are not the characteristics themselves, but rather what they mean and how they are used. It is common knowledge that adolescents are still in the process of shaping the social aspects of their personalities during this maturity phase. In addition to being less able to objectively judge their behaviour (self-criticism), adolescents may also be less able to choose which actions to do consciously. However, the predominant need for communication and the propensity to join a group at this age typically receive more focus. Teenagers can prove themselves and make themselves heard on the team when these conditions are in place (Ticker, 2014).

Conversely, some researchers contend that the state and crisis processes in society, with their detrimental effects on the development of the adolescent’s personality, play a more significant role in the formation of juvenile delinquent behaviour. All of this makes it harder for the child to learn how to get along with other people. This makes it hard for the child to move up in the world, and teenagers do not see college as a sure way to get a good job and find themselves. Meanwhile, involvement in risky activities and affiliation with the criminal underworld may be seen by young people as a form of social advancement that can produce quick results for little effort if no consideration is given to the long-term effects typical of adolescence (Ticker, 2014).

When studying the reasons why people commit crimes and the risk factors that lead to delinquency, it’s important to keep in mind that ICTs are becoming new ways to commit offences, shifting the traditional role of a juvenile offender to the digital domain. An increase in cybercrime has resulted from the rapid technological advancement of society, which has outpaced legislative regulation on multiple levels. This necessitates the investigation of a cybercriminal’s identity to better prevent crime in this area, which is currently understudied. The high latency of cybercrime points to a gap in the research on the identity of this kind of offender (Lee and Wang, 2024).

A direct examination of a juvenile cybercriminal’s personality can reveal the reasons behind the offence, how the victim of the crime sees the world and the general trends in cybercrime. The establishment of cybercrime motives plays a special role in aspects of crime qualification, sentencing, and cybercrime prevention (Poltava et al., 2020).

As it was mentioned previously, particular studies emphasize that cybercriminals are a separate group from online offenders. Both refer to individuals who commit offences (crimes) over the Internet or computer networks, but there are slight differences in usage between the terms. “Online offender” is a broader term that includes any criminal offense committed over the Internet, while “cybercriminal” most often refers to individuals involved in specific forms of cybercrime and information security attacks. According to certain scholars, among online offenders the cybercriminals have the lowest risk profile because their activities involve fewer risk factors than other types of abovementioned offenders (Rokven et al., 2018). Furthermore, there is evidence that cyber-offenders (cybercriminals) have the lowest likelihood of committing crimes offline (outside the online environment). Herewith, it is noted that traditional methods of criminological assessment of the personality of a “common” criminal today can only be partially applicable in relation to the study of the personality of a cybercriminal (namely, the so-called cyber-dependent criminals whose activities are directed against computer systems, networks, having deeper knowledge of the mechanisms of ICT functioning) (Rokven et al., 2018). This viewpoint is supported by current research. It is noted that, although traditional criminological theories can be used to study offenses associated with the cyber-enabled crime (online offences), new theories and techniques may be required to explain cyber-dependent offenses (cybercrimes) (Rokven et al., 2018).

Evidently, the overlap between cybercrime and traditional crimes creates many new challenges for the typology, legislative regulation, and criminal law classification of these types of crimes. In the same way that traditional offences are defined, it would be reasonable to define cybercrime categories and then classify individual acts under previously existing ones. However, because of their legal nature, some cybercrime offences may already be classified under pre-existing categories of offences. This overlap with other types of crime, as well as the wide range of criminal acts that can be classified as cybercrime, make it difficult to categorise cybercrime. It should be noted that there are currently efforts to categorise cybercrime (Sturc et al., 2023).

The classification of cybercrime offences is crucial for determining how severe an offence is. Nevertheless, this should rely on national law and practice as well as socio-legal realities because different states may assess the severity of harm in different ways. There are three categories of harm: minor, moderate, and significant. Meanwhile, it is necessary to consider the differences in the legal classification of crimes in each country, where other quantitative indicators may apply (Sturc et al., 2023).

Based on how forensic methods are used to classify cybercrime, it can be assumed that criminology can use a similar method to study the mind of a cybercriminal, using both traditional criminology methods and methods from related fields like sociology, forensic psychiatry, etc. It is important to highlight the fact that contemporary profile studies agree with this viewpoint. Since current methods for preventing and punishing juvenile delinquency focus mostly on traditional crimes, it remains to be seen if these methods are also effective at keeping youth from committing cybercrime (Rokven et al., 2018).

Clearly, criminologists have access to a wide variety of methods and approaches that they can adapt to conduct a more in-depth and comprehensive study of the identity of

a juvenile cybercrime offender. Currently, sociological research methods are the primary source of empirical material that is necessary to study the offender's personality. These research methods include surveys, analysis of documents directly or indirectly containing information of interest to the criminological researcher, expert assessments, observation, and experiments (Jupp, 2012; Mastroski et al., 2010).

Interviews are the most common method of gathering information, particularly for case studies. An interview is when criminological information is obtained from individuals by questioning them. It is important to keep in mind, however, that interviewing is inherently contradictory in the sense that it calls for the most objective information that can be gathered, even though the individual being interviewed is the source of the information being gathered. Therefore, for the researcher to be successful in overcoming this barrier, they need to have a solid understanding of the psychology of communication (Jupp, 2012). As was mentioned earlier, the potential criminal is heavily involved in the ICT domain, also known as cyberspace, which is the scene of the crime. This, in turn, has an effect on the criminal's personality and the way they think. Because of this, crime researcher needs to expand their knowledge into areas like ICT, computer networks, and Internet technology to create efficient methods of dealing with juvenile cybercriminals (offenders).

When it comes to the current readiness of traditional forensic science to investigate criminal cases of juvenile cybercrime, it should be noted that the latter is quite a complex task that necessitates the adaptation of techniques and practises. Cross-border nature, latency, the need to adapt criminal procedure laws governing procedural actions, the unusual behaviour of juvenile offenders, issues with the lack of pertinent methodologies on organising cybercrime investigations, and methods of training investigation and enquiry officers are just a few of the factors that not only cause some real challenges in the investigation process but can also compromise its efficacy. In essence, the same issues arise in the realms of legal defence and judicial proceedings. Meanwhile, it is clear that existing flaws in the use of ICT in cybercrime investigations can be related to broad organisational challenges in the use of classical forensic procedures. They also have a connection to the scientific, technical, tactical, and methodological aspects that currently exist and determine the actual potential applications of tools and techniques based on the use of digital (computer) technologies (Evseeva, 2019).

Separately, it might be worth mentioning that the term "juvenile cyber offender" needs to be standardised and that there needs to be a common understanding of what it means in terms of law, ethics, and how the public sees it. Although the term "juvenile offender" appears frequently in scholarly writing, it should be used with caution. The term itself is potentially problematic and, in certain contexts, may have a derogatory tone and misguided negative assumptions. For instance, the UN has been referring to a diverse group of people under the age of 18 who conflict with the law or are at risk of doing so as "children in conflict with the law" for many years (US Department of Justice, 2019). Given that contemporary sources do not employ a suitable criminological category, it is evident that criminology as a science will soon be tasked with developing terminology for the existing category of juvenile cyber-offender or cyber-delinquent and studying its criminological profile.

III. Conclusion

The research shows that most of the risk factors for getting involved in crime as a separate type of criminogenic factor have not changed much in recent years. There are personal moral factors and socioeconomic factors, as well as the social environment and the microclimate of the family. Delinquent behaviour and delinquency among juveniles are related to their heightened sensitivity to societal changes, which is reflected in their behavioural patterns and influences their perspectives on legality and lawful conduct. At the same time, it is important to note the emergence of new means of implementing malicious acts, which ICTs are currently becoming, transferring the traditional role of a juvenile offender to the digital plane. Presumably, the development of ICT and long-distance communication will weaken the influence of peer groups and the importance of hierarchy. This, in turn, can affect the structure and specificity of horizontal connections. Peer groups' role as a risk factor for delinquency can also be diminished. The research suggests that criminologists must master many additional skills in the area of ICT, computer networks, and Internet technologies to develop effective methods of dealing with juvenile cybercriminals (offenders). In addition, there still exist a problem associated with the lack of terminology, methods for assessing the personality of a juvenile cybercriminal, as well as the very definition of the concept of the latter. Clearly, criminology as a science will need to adopt a variety of methods and approaches in the future to study the personality of juvenile cybercriminals in greater depth. Simultaneously, criminology as a science will require terminological unification and a shared understanding of “juvenile cybercrime”, which is currently lacking. Subsequent research should address issues such as examining long-term trends and changes in the criminological profile of juvenile offenders, including shifts in crime types, age groups, and social factors. A separate research area should be devoted to the issues of comparing the criminological profile and personal traits of a contemporary juvenile offender in different countries.

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