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## **Individual-Psychological Determinants of Behavior of Juvenile Criminals Committed Grave Violent Crimes**

*Generally, determination as psychological category is understood as causality of events and phenomena by external and internal factors (incentives, stimuli). Biological and constitutional factors are not determinants of juvenile getting into delinquency, but become some “favorable background” of personal deformation, determining a propensity of motivational and behavioral mental formations of an adolescent for negative external factors. Due to the interaction of internal constitutional factors and external adverse antisocial influences, with no effective positive educational or preventive impact, negative personal characterological changes, which in turn determine the deformation of the motivational and behavioral spheres of a teenager, occur. We argue that the key area, which undergoes deformation and consequently determines the dissimilarity of delinquent adolescents with a propensity for violence, is their social adaptation. In turn, social exclusion of violent juvenile offenders is due to a combination of external (social and psychological) and internal (individual and psychological) factors, which together determine extreme deformability of the sense of justice.*

**Keywords:** juvenile criminals, behavior, violent crimes, individual-psychological determinants.

**G**enerally, determination as psychological category is understood as causality of events and phenomena by external and internal factors (incentives, stimuli). According to both criminology and psychology, determinants are distinguished by, so to speak, vectors divided into:

- external (caused by external conditions and circumstances)
- internal (related to personal dispositions, needs, attitudes, interests, values, inclinations, desires).

Therefore, scrutinizing determinants of the formation of delinquent adolescent’s directivity to commit grave violent crimes

requires analysis of both external and internal components. According to psychological science, external determinants of any behavioral activity comprise external conditions of physical environment and social conditions, while internal ones comprise biological and intrapersonal mechanisms of illegal behavior. However, in this article, we will focus on examination of internal, that is individual psychological determinants of behavior of juvenile criminals committed grave violent crimes.

The starting point of internal determinants analysis of delinquent adolescent's directivity formation should consider biological and hereditary physique preconditions and their interaction with intrapersonal factors and mechanisms of illegal behavior.

According to Dubinin, Karpets and Kudryavtsev, internal biological processes play a significant role in formation of illegal behavior, because they determine the intensity and nature of one's reactions to any environmental influences. However, geneticists, psychologists and criminologists point out that biological characteristics of an individual do not generate crime by themselves, although affect the dynamics of human behavior.

In other words, biological and constitutional factors are not determinants of juvenile getting into delinquency, but become some «favorable background» of personal deformation, determining a propensity of motivational and behavioral mental formations of an adolescent for negative external factors. Due to the interaction of internal constitutional factors and external adverse antisocial influences, with no effective positive educational or preventive impact, negative personal characterological changes, which in turn determine the deformation of the motivational and behavioral spheres of a teenager, occur.

Thus, Zaika, Kreidun, Yachynoyi attempt to identify individual and psychological characterological features that define the deformation of motivational and behavioral spheres of delinquent teenagers. The authors note that adolescents with antisocially orientated personality possess such criminogenic traits as distorted value system, social exclusion, inadequately exaggerated demands, and distorted image of the future that together indicate a gap in personal development.

For example, analyzing individual psychological mechanisms of violent juvenile behavior Vdovichenko specifies anxiety reaction, not socialized aggressiveness, «dipping into one's inner world» reaction,

the reaction of imitation, the reaction of compensation or hypercompensation, and capture reactions [1].

Furthermore, scientists, Dzhuzha, Kondratyev, Kulyk, Videnyeyev and Myhaylenko, classify such main characteristics of juvenile offenders, who have committed violent crimes, as defective social identification, emotional dullness, impulsive aggression, extreme egocentricity and cynicism. Similarly, aggressive juvenile behavior correlates with such negative personal traits as high level of anxiety, overstated self-esteem, inability to emotional empathy, inability to predict the development of conflict and the effects of aggressive actions. This list is certainly not exhaustive.

However, it is important to understand not only the formation of certain maladaptive personal characteristics of violent juvenile offenders but also age specific that determines uniqueness of such extreme deformation of social attitudes in adolescence. For example, Vygotsky emphasized that the main feature of adolescence is inconsistency of pubertal processes, total organic development and social formation [2]. Therefore, developing this thesis Bratus and Lichko underline that physiological stress on the physique during puberty, organism rapid maturation and the restructuring of all its systems often provoke hidden (compensated) mental disorders [3]. In modern times, this problem is particularly actual because of acceleration when puberty is well ahead of the other two processes.

From the perspective of the specific physiological adolescent changes throughout puberty, the issue of violence committed by juvenile on sexual grounds should be itemized. Studies of the roots of juvenile sexual violent crimes emphasize that an adolescent prone to sexual harassment has certain clinical characteristic such as male insolvency feeling, low self-esteem, fear of rejection, anger against women, aberrant erotic fantasy, identification with models of aggression, violence and intimidation. In addition, the basic characteristic of juvenile prone to sexual violence is a bad volitional regulation of own behavior and poor social adaptation indicated by undeveloped social skills, social isolation due to inability to communicate, lack of confidence due to the inability to assert oneself.

Evaluation of juvenile sexual offenders should recognize that their behavior could be of different nature subject to the circumstances of such violence. Thus, as for group rape, leading motive is often not to satisfy sexual desire but efforts to assert oneself in the eyes of accomplices. Another psychological meaning

attributes to violent sex crimes committed by teenage singular, when along with the age desire to assert oneself youthful hypersexuality comes at the forefront. Such dissoluteness of sexual impulses is associated with certain mental health problems such as delinquency, impulsivity, behavior deviancies, hyperactivity and substance abuse.

Since the end of the twentieth century and to the present, a number of published scientific researches of clinicians have performed a comparative analysis of psychological assessment of adolescents, who have committed violent sexual offenses, in relation to the data evaluation of adolescents, who have committed other violent crimes. For example, studies with MMPI techniques and the Rorschach test have revealed almost no difference between the two groups of adolescents. Thus, we can conclude that juvenile violent sexual offenders constitute only a subset of juvenile delinquents and sociopaths. Although, according to the Rorschach test, sexual offenders showed more suppressed hostility and destructive impulses.

Additionally, juvenile psychological characteristics, which distinguish adolescents from both children and adults, comprise peculiarities of intellectual development. Thus, Kondrashenko argues that intelligence of juvenile offenders are usually below average [4]. The absence of life experience complicates their social adaptation and determine ill-considered actions and the social danger of possible consequences. Therefore, juveniles commit crimes characterized by rather situational than intended type of motivation, due to immaturity and lack of development of their psyche. Committed by them crimes are ill-considered because of mental defects but largely determined by the situation and situational psychological state of the juvenile.

This lack of intellectual formation complicates (or even makes impossible) the awareness of choices in behavior that does not allow teenagers to realize socially dangerous consequences of their violent actions and take responsibility for them. Moreover, Fromm noted that no outside force is capable to solve one's personal problem. A person should take responsibility by oneself and admit that one can make own life meaningful only by oneself. However, often lacking of mental maturity, the juvenile is not aware of the depth of public danger of own offences.

The awkward age of a teenager demands to take into account «marginal» status between age groups of children and adults that causes dominance of affirmational motivation. In particular, modern

psychology presents widespread concept of «identity crisis» as a key feature of adolescence. From this perspective, «identity» is interpreted as efforts to define oneself as autonomous (adult) personality and individuality. The «identity» formation of juvenile is the result of «child I» collapse and the need to combine a new «adult I». In the absence of socially useful goals of self-affirmation, this process causes primarily complications and disorders in adolescent behavior.

Investigating juvenile aggression, Boyko indicates that its roots are in anger and reduced self-esteem due to experienced life failures and injustice (father's leave, bad relationships at school etc.). Thus, for juveniles, the cruelty serves as such a peculiar combination of vengeance, self-affirmation and evaluation of own forces. In the culmination of violence, adolescents feel compensatory euphoria, which they cannot explain after excitement have passed.

Here again we observe interaction of internal and external factors, because inner motivation of adolescent self-affirmation as an adult need outside reinforcements from the referent environment. If this environment comprises not legal obedient citizens and representatives of antisocial environment, respectively the vector of adolescent behavioral activity changes. This is because the success of self-realization depends on the feeling of self-esteem based on assessment by referent to teenager environment.

The scientific results of Klein's [5] ten-year longitudinal study of 9300 seventh graders supports the thesis stated above. He concluded that low self-esteem positively correlates with almost all kinds of deviant behavior such as dishonesty, membership in antisocial groups, commitment of offenses, drug use, drunkenness, aggressive behavior, self-aggression (suicide).

On this basis, G. Klein exposes a chain of explanations of such correlation:

1. Deviant behavior reduces self-esteem as a teenager involuntarily obtains a negative public attitude towards his/her actions, and thus to him/herself, which exacerbates his/her alienation.

2. Low self-esteem contributes to delinquent behavior, because participating in the activities of antisocial groups, a teenager tries to improve his/her psychological status among peers and find new ways of self-assertion, which he/she has not had in the family and school.

3. Therefore, illusion as though deviant behavior may contribute to compensatory increase in self-esteem is created [5].

These physiological overloads on the organism of a teenager together with identity crisis under an effective positive educational influence may determine the origin of social exclusion. Thus, Shybutani [6] distinguishes three types of deviant behavior associated with social exclusion:

1. More or less adapted to the society with a normal self-control and complete mentality. Violations are of situational and socialized character.

2. Impulsive type of deviant behavior is the result of a temporary loss of self-control because a propensity for affects. There are many cases of theft, desertion and violence committed impulsively, contrary to personal standards.

3. Compulsive type of deviant behavior is the result of a pathological nature, based on unproductive defensive psychological mechanisms (e.g., own aggressiveness projections on the victim) [6].

It should be emphasized that the cruelty actualization of a violent juvenile criminal with no mental disorders is often multi-motivated and has external nature (removal of a particular person or a particular obstacle to achieve the goal). Sequentially, as for individuals with mental disorders, their internal determinants of criminal motivations, comprising manifestations of violence, are much more common. These can be manifestations of unproductive compensation of intention of self-affirmation or improvement of self-esteem, demonstration of superiority over the surrounding under inability to recover self-esteem (self-respect) the other way.

Speaking about the pathological factors of violent juvenile behavior, the internal biological hereditary and constitutional preconditions, which Licko refers as to mental disorders subdivided into psychotic and nonpsychotic as well as phenomena of acceleration and infantilism [7], should be considered.

Moreover, non-psychotic borderline mental disorders include: a) asthenic syndrome; b) neurosis and neurotic conditions; c) psychopathic-like and psychopathic symptoms; g) psychophysical infantilism. In turn, psychotic disorders include: a) faintness (delirious, oneiric, amnesia); b) partial disorder of consciousness (hallucinatory, paranoid, etc.). In addition, defective and organic syndromes include: a) psycho-organic; b) Korsakov's (amnestic); c) lacunar and total dementia. Therefore, considering the borderline mental disorders, which determine social exclusion of a teenager

performed in violent forms of delinquent behavior, the accentuation and psychopathic disorders should be emphasized.

Referring to the problem of boundary deviations with some hypertrophied traits causing selective vulnerability towards certain psychogenic influences but normal resistance to others, Leonhard and Licko define them as accentuation of the character. Investigating accentuations of adolescents, Lichko outlines such types as hyper-excited, cycloid, labile, asthenic-neurotic, sensitive, psycho-asthenic, schizoid, epileptic, hysteric, unstable, conformal [7].

Generally, such borderline mental disorders as accentuation actualizes in adolescence, but then gradually are smoothed out and compensated, though sometimes under adverse conditions they transform into psychopathy, which is defined by characterological disorders manifested directly by social exclusion. «The aggressive-defensive style of behavior» can be fixed and affect further life of an adult, manifesting itself in periods of increased vulnerability to unexpected stimuli or life crises.

The study of interrelation of borderline mental disorders in the form of accentuation and forms of illegal behavior like situational and personal reactions has a very long history. In particular, such long-term studies have proved that juveniles with epileptic, hysteric, unstable and hyper-excited traits are most likely to commit illegal actions. Thus, using Lichko's PDS techniques and MMPI, the study of the types of accentuation and individual personality profiles of delinquent juveniles identify two main types of adolescents prone to violent offences:

1. Subsequently, they are more likely to lose control over their impulses, abuse alcohol and commit crimes while intoxicated. The main feature is their affective explosiveness, irritability, a propensity for the occurrence of unjustified viciously sad mood. In such state, they commit acts of aggression even because of minor reasons.

2. Hysteric type with increased emotional lability is demonstrative in self-assertion, therefore use alcohol for the demonstration of own maturity and while intoxicated resort to violence just to perform own supremacy over the weaker or more helpless victim.

Scientific research on interrelation of mental abnormalities of adolescent with juvenile crimes committing proved that mentally healthy juvenile offenders were only 1/3, while certain traits of neuropsychiatric disorders were registered in more than half of the

recipients. Thus, the first among borderline mental disorders within legal responsibility (or diminished responsibility) are organic, comprising traumatic brain injury (36.7 %), psychopathy and psychopathic-like states (32.4 %), and mental retardation (16%).

In conclusion, we argue that the key area, which undergoes deformation and consequently determines the dissimilarity of delinquent adolescents with a propensity for violence, is their social adaptation. In turn, social exclusion of violent juvenile offenders is due to a combination of external (social and psychological) and internal (individual and psychological) factors, which together determine extreme deformability of the sense of justice. In comparison with acquisitive juvenile offenders, violent offenders demonstrate much deeper social exclusion. Evidently, the acquisitive offenders still realize greater public danger of life violations, which refrain them from violent crimes. In case, at this age phase of development a juvenile possesses immature basic social values, which include human life and health, it points at a significant social exclusion and requires urgent preventive and corrective actions.

All available scientific achievements enable to diagnose in advance «the group at risk» and predict possible variations of violations of juvenile behavior if a thorough study by professional psychologists is conducted. Detected with diagnostics possible deviations allow to specify psychological and educational activities aimed at their prevention and correction.

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### **Індивідуально-психологічні детермінанти поведінки неповнолітніх злочинців, які вчинили тяжкі насильницькі злочини**

Визначено детермінацію як причину зумовленість подій і явищ зовнішніми та внутрішніми чинниками (стимулами, подразниками). Доведено, що біологічні й конституційні чинники слугують не детермінантами делінквентизації неповнолітнього, а лише певним тлом, що «сприяє» особистісній деформації, зумовлюючи відкритість мотиваційно-поведінкових психічних утворень підлітка до негативних зовнішніх чинників.

**Ключові слова:** неповнолітні злочинці, поведінка, тяжкі насильницькі злочини, індивідуально-психологічні детермінанти.