Early marginalization and criminal activity

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The article presents the problem about the early marginalization and its connection with criminal activity during the youth and adulthood. The analysis of empirical data on the causes of early alcohol and drug use and qualitative aspects of criminal activity points to the need to develop strategies for impact on family and friend's environments and to overcome social exclusion.

Keywords: early marginalization; alcohol and drug use; criminal activity.

Introduction

Marginalization is a process, which is often unlocked in the persons until the age of maturity under the influence of various factors of the social environment and accompanies their criminal activity in adulthood. In criminological research, that process relates to the study of life trajectories of drug and alcohol-using offenders, whose criminal career is stable throughout youth and adulthood (2009).

Early marginalization leads to serious increase of the risk to committing crimes in the years before the age of maturity. For example, a study following 15,000 young people from the age of 14 to 17 has founded out that persons who drink aged 15 are six times more likely to increase their criminal activity over the next year, compared to a non-drinkers (Green, Ross, 2010). The data on drug use and the increase of crimes in late teenage years are analogous (Pierce, Hayhurst, Bird, Hickman, Seddon, Dunn, Millar, 2017).

In Bulgaria after 1989 the processes of marginalization and criminalization in society have their negative effects among young people. One of the characteristics of the contemporary crime in the country is its juvenisation, related to the increase in the participation of juveniles in committing crimes. Among the factors for early criminalization of children is their bringing in danger to abuse drugs (Stankov, 2011). In Country drug report 2017 has indicated that illicit drug use is concentrated among young people aged 15-34 years with the highest use of cannabis and increasing in use of MDMA among younger adults aged 15-24 years (2017).

The retrospective study, conducted in 2016-2017 in the Varna Prison, provides, together with the basic data about the stigmatization of the prisoners, and additional data for the early marginalization of some of the persons in the contingent. According to the results of survey, 42 prisoners

(18.7 % of all 225 interviewees) used drugs and alcohol at an early age (as minors and juveniles). The indicated group represents 51% of all 83 respondents who were taking into report in children's pedagogical room until the age of 18. In other words, the processes of marginalization are observed among half of the respondents with early onset of criminal activity. Among them the persons who have developed drug addiction predominate - a total of 24 (e.g. interviewed with profiles "V4", "P6", "B5", etc.). They all have two or more committed crimes before the last, for which they are punished by imprisonment. The highest share of persons is with four and five previous crimes. Repeaters with more than 10 previous crimes account for 1/4 of all recidivists with a marginalization process beginning before the age of maturity.

Similar to the category of people with drug addiction, 18 respondents who have abused alcohol as minors and juveniles are detected. All of them have developed criminal activity involving more than two previous crimes before the last, for which they are punished by imprisonment. Therefore, alcoholism and drug addiction are found among the primary factors generating early deviations in behavior among some of the surveyed persons and continue to accompany their criminal activity in adulthood.

Secondly, some of the respondents report to antisocial acts related to the use and distribution of drugs, committed by them as minors. An alarming signal is the reported information that these behavioral deviations that initiated the antisocial activity have remained uninvestigated (e.g., interviewed with profiles "X3" and "C5"). In this regard, 13 of the respondents report that at the time of their early use of drugs, teachers did not know about it or did not have information how to deal with the problem. These data point to the latency of part of the criminal acts and difficulties in revealing the real boundaries of the early marginalization process among young people.

Another aspect of the relationship between early marginalization and criminal activity is found in the collected data on the causes of drug and alcohol use. They are related to the family and friend's environment. For example, among those who developed drug addiction as minors and juveniles, more than half originated from families of divorced parents. In some cases there is alcohol or drug use in the family of respondents. For example, the interviewee with profile "O1" was drug addicted as minor. The first antisocial act was committed by him at age 12 because of a group of adult friends. In the course of the interview, it was found that these friends were "a group of drug addicts to which his father had directed him". There is also a third category among the respondents who, as children, were deprived of parental care and left in an institution. For example, interviewed with profile "P" up to the age of 3 was placed in a home for children deprived of parental care, after which he was adopted and raised by a single mother. Despite the mother's efforts to provide educational care, the boy fell into a drug-addicted youth environment, which further led to the commission of drug-related crimes. These data correspond to data from other studies of youth drug addicts in Bulgaria, according to which the negative qualities, formed and acquired under the influence of the family, are mainly inherent to early marginalized persons dealing with drug use and distribution of drugs (Kitanov, 2008).

There are also cases where enthusiasm and curiosity are the factors that prompted the use of drugs and the commission of antisocial acts and crimes. For example, the respondent with profile "X" reports that he is drug addicted from the age of 14. Although his parents were not divorced, parental control was weakened because the father had worked abroad. At this point, the juvenile was unsuccessfully treated by dependence at an institution. He developed aggression under the influence of drugs and was given educational measures. One year before the age of maturity, the interviewee finally entered a group of drug addicts set up to commit drug-related, theft and robbery offenses.

Unlike early drug addicts, respondents who have abused alcohol as juveniles are predominantly not from families of divorced parents. On the contrary, the family environment has been relatively favorable, but low parental control and, above all, the influence of friend's environment have led to alcohol addiction and first behavioral deviations.

For example, the interviewee with profile "G2" has committed his first thefts at 15 years. His primary environment of friends and classmates has withdrawn from him and the criminal environment has increasingly engaged him. It has already been manifested with the processes of marginalization and alcohol abuse, which have begun. The beginning of the violent implementation of crimes against property has begun in this environment under the influence of the alcohol. As a result of the process of marginalization and the unleashed aggression, the interviewee was convicted as juvenile for a robbery that started his criminal activity.

Farther, the survey collected data on the qualitative aspects of criminal activity in persons who, by the age of maturity, had abused alcohol or drugs. Respondents who have developed drug dependence from an early age are

characterized by the subsequent committing of crimes against property (theft and robbery) and drug-related crimes. These data correspond with the results of criminal activity surveys among the drug addicted population in other countries. According to them, "offenders convicted of robbery, burglary, and larceny/theft were most likely to commit their offense to obtain money to buy drugs" (1994). A case in point for an offender committing crimes against property and drug-related crimes is "W3". He comes from a family of divorced parents, in which the mother raised him alone. His antisocial activity began at the age of 12 with committing of theft, robbery and bodily injury. At the age of 16 he was admitted to membership to a drug distribution group. The interviewee reports that he has been convicted only of crimes against property. At the same time, the drug-related offenses committed by him have remained unsolved. Analogous are and the life trajectories of interviewed with profiles Z3" and "B4".

Respondents with early alcohol abuse show a greater homogeneity of their criminal activity. About 2/3 of them are offenders of property crimes. Only five respondents have heterogeneous activity, including other types of crime such as drunk driving, causing bodily injury and hooliganism. A typical example of intense and homogeneous criminal activity against property is the interviewed with profile "H2". He has convicted of a total of 14 crimes committed under the influence of alcohol and the friend's environment.

In the interviewed with profile "P8" the aggression and the intensity of the criminal activity were unlocked due to the use of alcohol and drugs. He comes from a family of divorced parents and his aggression has been unlocked as early as the age of minority because of the alcohol abuse. The criminal biography of the respondent includes different types of crimes such as: causing average bodily injury, theft, robbery and drunk driving.

In conclusion, the results of the Varna prison study can be illustrative of the unfavorable trends associated with the early marginalization among the persons until the age of maturity. The indicated causes of alcohol and drug abuse in the age of minority and juvenile point to the need for individual preventive impact on the family and friend's environment. A differentiated approach is necessary for people with early drug addiction and those who abuse alcohol as minors and juveniles. In the drug addicted population, the measures should focus primarily on family environment impact where the original causes of deviations have been detected. On the other hand with young people with alcohol abuse the impact is needed to target friend's environment in which social pathologies are reproduced. Deficits at early age, which have unlocked the process of marginalization and the subsequent criminalization of people with social pathology, are primarily connected with non-acceptance and social exclusion. This requires the measures to influence already existing and recidivating criminals include their treatment and resocialization in prisons, as well as the creation of prerequisites for labor activity and integration into a new social environment after serving the punishment. The established conventional nature of criminality of the persons with early marginalization points to the fact that alcohol and drug use in adolescence interrupts their ability to continue the educational process and pushes them to the criminal

subcultures. The analysis of the data from the profiles of the interviewed leads to the conclusion that the criminal experience and the type of the committed crimes are acquired in the contacts with other offenders as well as during the stay in the correctional institutions for juveniles

and prisons. Consequently, specialized care can be provided for persons with alcohol and drug addiction, including both addiction resistance and resistance to the impact of reoffenders.

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