

SCOPE STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA IN THE PERIOD 2013-2022

Ebru IBISH, PhD

ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency refers to criminal behaviors and actions committed by children in conflict with the law, mostly between ages 14-16 and 16-18. It encompasses a wide range of offenses, such as theft, vandalism, drug abuse, and even violent crimes. Several factors contribute to the development of juvenile delinquency. These include family dysfunction, peer influence, socioeconomic status, and a lack of positive role models. Many young offenders come from broken homes or dysfunctional families characterized by abuse, neglect, or violence. The socioeconomic background of a young person also plays a role in juvenile delinquency. Poverty, unemployment, and a lack of access to educational opportunities can increase the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities. To address the issue of juvenile delinquency, a holistic and multidimensional approach is necessary. It involves early intervention, community programs, and rehabilitation efforts. Implementing effective prevention programs that target at-risk youth can help reduce delinquent behavior before it becomes deeply ingrained. When researching a complex phenomenon such as juvenile delinquency, it is important to consider its dynamic structure and scope. In this article, we discussed juvenile delinquency, taking into account the official data of the Republic of North Macedonia for the last ten years. Furthermore, we have provided a detailed explanation, emphasizing certain crucial terms per the North Macedonian child protection law.

Keywords: Juvenile, delinquency, crime, child, law

**Ebru IBISH, PhD,
Assistant Professor**

*International Vision
University, Faculty of
Law*

e-mail:
ebru.ibis@vision.edu.mk

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INTRODUCTION

In identifying the causes of criminal behavior, it is important to determine which factors contribute to a delinquent identity and why some adolescents who adopt a delinquent image do not discard that image in the process of becoming an adult. Delinquent identity is quite complex and is, in fact, an overlay of several identities linked to delinquency itself and to a person's ethnicity, race, class and gender. Delinquent identity is always constructed as an alternative to the conventional identity of the larger society. Violence and conflict are necessary elements in the construction of group and delinquent identities. (Report, 2003)

In order to analyze the scope, structure, and dynamics of juvenile delinquency, it is very important to define the phenomenology term. Phenomenology comes from the Greek word *phainómenon*, which means phenomenon ("that which appears"), and the Latin word *logos*, which means study. There are several basic emergent forms of criminality, including juvenile delinquency. In order to be able to research the phenomenology of juvenile delinquency, the scope (totality), structure, dynamics, and emergent forms, including gender and age, and prevalence of juvenile delinquency, should be observed as particularly important characteristics.

Considering the above-mentioned basic components of phenomenology, **scope** means monitoring criminality statistics from the total number of crimes committed in a certain place and a certain period. Here we also list the statistical number of crimes committed and perpetrators of crimes, specifically adults, children, etc. One of the main problems is the "dark number" of criminality within the framework of determining the scope or totality. The types and characteristics of total criminality are included in the structure of juvenile crime and the types of crimes committed by juvenile delinquents.

The dynamics of criminality, as the next characteristic, can only be imagined with the structure and scope of criminality. Thus, the dynamics or movement of criminality refers to changes in the extent of criminality as a social mass phenomenon during a period and in a certain space, or generally speaking. The dynamics explain the decrease or increase in the rate of criminality in a certain period. By sublimating the

scope, structure, and dynamics, we obtain data for a certain period around the statistical movement of juvenile crime.

1. The Scope of the Juvenile Crime

The scope of juvenile delinquency can be determined for each year or longer and shorter periods (e.g., longitudinal research) for an entire country or region. The scope of juvenile delinquency, but also the scope of general criminality, can be determined by:

- filed criminal charges against children (reported children in conflict with the law),
- filed charges against children (accused children in conflict with the law) and
- convicted children in conflict with the law.

The recording of criminality is of crucial importance for measuring criminality in a country. It is important to say that only some countries have institutions that keep statistics on criminality. In the Republic of North Macedonia, specifically, records on juvenile delinquency are kept by: The State Statistics Office, the basic courts, the Ministry of Justice, the Center for Social Work, and the Ministry of the Interior.

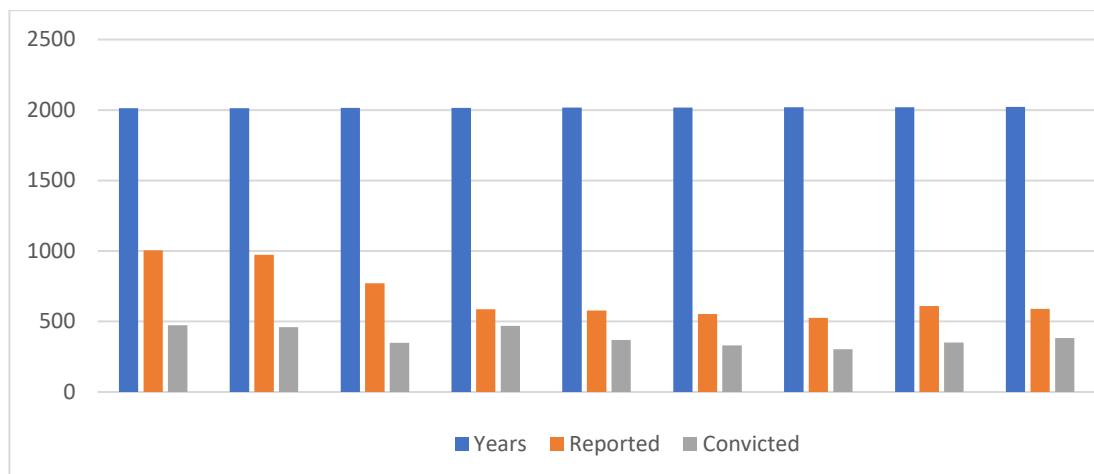
Table number 1: Reported and convicted juvenile delinquents from 2013-2022 in RNM

The term "reported child - perpetrator of a crime" means a child against whom the criminal complaint procedure has not been initiated (the complaint has been rejected), against whom the preparatory procedure has been stopped, or a proposal for sentencing or an educational measure has been submitted. The term "convicted person" means a child - a perpetrator of a crime who has been sentenced to a criminal sanction - prison for children or an educational measure - by a court decision. In order to show the difference, or rather the representation of children in conflict with the law within the overall criminality in Macedonia, we present the situation regarding reported and convicted adults in North Macedonia. (Perpetrators of Criminal Offences, 2016)

Table number 1: Reported and convicted juvenile delinquents from 2013-2022 in RNM

Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Reported	1005	972	772	587	578	554	525	610	589	473
Convicted	473	461	348	468	368	330	304	350	382	262

Graph number 1: Reported and convicted juvenile delinquents from 2013-2022 in RNM



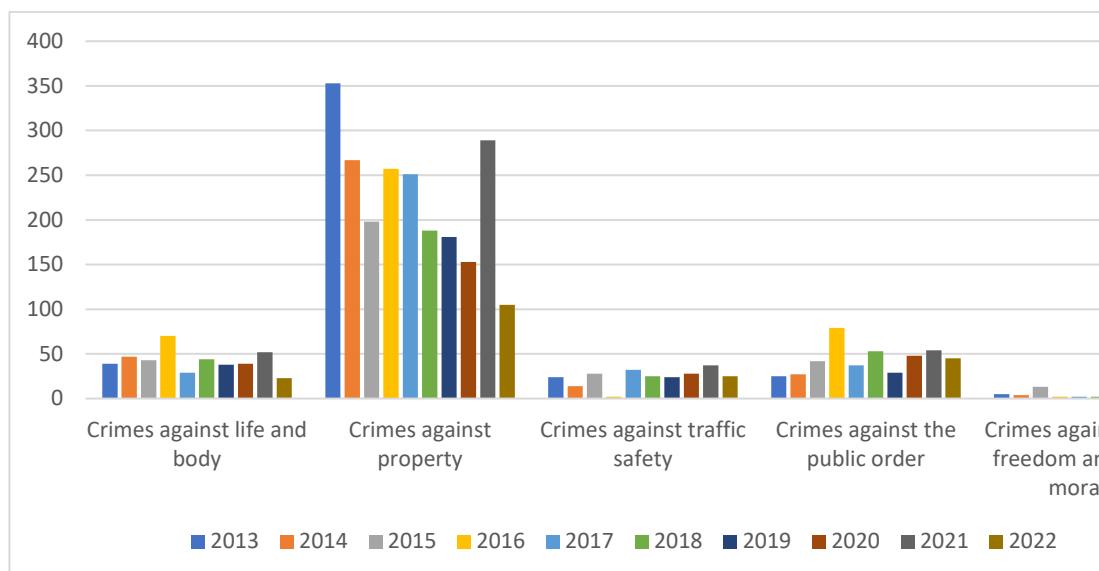
2. The Structure of the Juvenile Crime

The structure represents a factual basis on which the facts that characterize certain phenomena (structural changes in society that lead to the occurrence and changes in criminality and delinquency) are systematized and explain their internal composition. The structure expresses the composition of the phenomenon, while classification is applied as a method to explain the structure of the phenomenon. (Arnaudovski, 2007)

Table number 2: Most committed types of crimes by juvenile delinquents in RNM

Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Crimes against life and body	39	47	43	70	29	44	38	39	52	23
Crimes against property	353	267	198	257	251	188	181	153	289	105
Crimes against traffic safety	24	14	28	2	32	25	24	28	37	25
Crimes against the public order	25	27	42	79	37	53	29	48	54	45
Crimes against sexual freedom and sexual morality	5	4	13	2	2	2	2	5	15	15

Graph number 2: Most committed types of crimes by juvenile delinquents in RNM



3. Movement (Dynamics) of the Juvenile Crime

The third important characteristic of criminal phenomenology is the dynamics or the movement of criminality and delinquency. Crime and delinquency are dynamic and changing; they show constant scale, structure, and prevalence changes. The dynamics of delinquency are influenced by the following factors: social, economic, political, cultural, etc., so, for example, if the transition period is taken into account, it can be noted that the dynamics of criminality and delinquency are different.

It should be emphasized that within the mentioned factors, it is important to add migrations, which in the last few years have proven to be a serious factor in the movement of juvenile delinquency. Specifically in North Macedonia, the collapse of the socialist system and the beginning of the transition period created changes in the structure, scope, and dynamics of criminality and delinquency. Hence, this situation contributed to creating new forms of criminality and delinquency. The historical dimension of the dynamics of juvenile delinquency is of great importance in order to be able to analyze statistical data or, rather, the movement of juvenile delinquency over the years.

Conclusion

The characteristics of juvenile crime are perceived through certain variables: gender, age, financial situation etc. All of the above variables as factors directly influence the development of the juvenile. The contemporary juvenile crimes characterized by the organization of young people in juvenile groups or gangs for the commission of criminal offenses. (İbış, 2022) Juvenile delinquency has increased in proportion to industrialization in Western societies. Industrialization brings together rapid and irregular urbanization. As a result, unemployment, inequalities in income distribution, and deterioration of traditions, especially the increase in the population of children and young people, create a tendency to crime.

The study of the position of the child in criminal law and criminology has a wider scientific and social significance because the way the child is treated in the criminal law of a certain criminal law system is an indicator of the degree of development of that system following the achievements of the criminal law field.

Property crimes, as well as crimes against public order, crimes against the general safety of people and property, not only in Republic of North Macedonia but also in other countries, are characterized as typical crimes committed by juvenile perpetrators and are characteristic of juvenile delinquency, but the situation surrounding the presence of crimes against life and body and crimes against sexual freedom and sexual morality is extremely worrying, this situation indicates that it is high time to create more comprehensive actions for the prevention of juvenile delinquency at the national level in order to reduce the rate of the listed serious crimes.

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