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YOUTH AND CRIME IN THE GREEK CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The image of a juvenile delinquent is restructured (in the Greek context) mainly on the basis of individual and social factors, as well as of pre-criminal situations. This young person has some 'special' individual characteristics (gender, physiognomy, biological factors, psychological factors and other elements of anti-social behaviour) or lives in a special environment. Nevertheless, another reading of Greek official statistics, at least for the last decade, leads us to the conclusion that juvenile delinquency is not so much the result of psychological or other individual peculiarities but has to do with social conditions and the access to means (motor-cycles) or the lack of means (beggary). It is mainly related to the visibility of the offence and the work of the prosecuting authorities and not so much to a particularly serious character of an action or deviant behaviour. Therefore we state that the study of youth crime should escape from any limited interpretations of the phenomenon. In any case, we must neither adopt an exclusively causal approach of youth crime, nor feel fear of victimisation, in order to minimise their penal or social stigmatizing.

Key words: youth and crime, criminology, youth orientation, social factors, criminal situation, Greek context

1. INTRODUCTION¹

"John A. is fourteen years old. Because of his homosexual orientation and the fact that he constantly run away from home, his parents who had two boys and two girls younger than him, asked for the intervention of the state on the grounds of 'moral deviation'. Firstly, however, they tried to deter him from his 'activities' by using indescribable, torturing methods of maltreatment. They locked him up, they tied him on the bed with ropes or chains, they beat him up, they made incisions on the soles of his feet and rubbed salt into the wounds. They believed that in this way they would achieve his compliance and at the same time they would save family's honour from any defamation"(1). The above example of juvenile deviant behaviour, certified by Greek formal social control, underlines the need for the study of crime to escape from any limited interpretations of the phenomenon (as expressed by several Greek criminologists), which at the same time threaten to blur its social origin. The danger posing from the autonomy of the object of study from this origin, may lead to the legitimisation of status quo. For instance, scientific questions regarding the nature of crime, as though they examine 'another' reality, (the pursued answers to these questions) will lead to the recording of a technical knowledge by 'experts'. Even though they positify any scientific conclusions drawn through the use of scientific methods and techniques, the frame of their action remains idealistic. The main ideology supported is the ideology of the maintenance and reproduction of a specific social condition which does not become the object of scientific research. If the scientific question posed has a limited character (which is the cause, which is the result of this action) and issues of cultural, historical, social, political and economic perspectives are excluded, the answer will be in advance teleological and clearly conservative.

2. THE DISCOVERY OF YOUTH AND THE COVERING UP OF CRIME

Considering youth as a phase of the biological, psychological, cognitive and emotional evolution of an individual between childhood and adulthood is an apparently pluralistic approach which nevertheless leads to an interpretation of the issue, which is not only absolutely limited but also non historical, vulnerable to criticism of social theory and furthermore subject to criticism in the scientific fields that it tries to adopt.

Firstly, youth as a social category in the contemporary sense did not exist in the pre-industrial societies. It comes into existence at the end of the 18th and in the 19th century and it is the outcome of social processes related to industrialisation (2).

Secondly is the development of subjective strategies, especially in connection with young people, relevant to the formation of the concept of personal identity.

The personal identity of a young person, however, is historically and socially defined, subject to revising as the time passes or the place changes. The ability of the child to conceive, experience and interpret reality undergoes great alterations. The child shows also the tendency to adopt the attitudes of others. These others, the selection of friends and role-models are affected by similarities in social origin, in the participation in a national and religious group, by the

¹ The author would like to thank **Kelly Kalamatianou** and **Aimilia Voulvouli** for their comments and corrections on the final draft.

closeness of ideas and values. Identification is also a procedure in which discipline and control are the prevailing elements. Discipline is imposed at the very early stages of the life of an individual. This refers to the swaddling and the terrorization of children by instilling in them the fear of ghosts, their abandonment and maltreatment as primary forms of social control. Later children play but at the same time they are integrated into an internal organisation characterised by a division of roles, they imitate, form groups, choose leader and remain loyal to them. If the children cheat or refuse to play, they become marginalised. At school young people obey to an explicit code of discipline. Class is organised in a controlled way, since management, apart from working environments dominates as ideology in education as well. In every step of a young person there is motive and punishment, while expected behaviours are codified and instrumentalised through a system of 'good practices'. Familywise the young person is financially dependent on the parents, while in very rare cases he/she refuses the latter's advice on educational, political and labour issues. Differences are observed mainly in the style of appearance and only when there are reference groups, individuals with whom the youngster passes most of his leisure time. The young person though is proved to show excessive conformity to his peer group. Compliance is more easily achieved when the boundary line of the group's tolerance and the penalties imposed for disobedience are clearly defined. On the whole, youth is trapped in webs of intimacy which function as mechanism of control and reproduction of a family's structure. As Tselika mentions (3) the concept of authoritarian structures of intimacy can be used to explain the intense emotional ties within the Greek family, the non-dynamic effort of the young generations for independence and the gradual reproduction of forms of interaction and social expression, even when those have lost their content and meaning. Tselika draws the general conclusion that by examining the subject of youth, one can realize that in the course of history and in different civilizations, institutions are systematically established, whose main target is to control the 'mutiny dynamic' developed in adolescence. In the final analysis, the completion of the tendency of emancipation and autonomy expressed in adolescence is hard to achieve. On the contrary, supervision and control are evident everywhere and when these are not enough, there comes repression.

Consequently, the mechanism of formal social control, that is stigmatizing a person as 'deviant' or even 'criminal' is one of the procedures that define the identity and action of youth. Around this issue revolves also the scientific discourse of positivist criminology, which is based on the working hypothesis that there is a common evaluation of 'evil' and 'crime' and that both are subject to general resentment. In this case juvenile delinquency is disguised, since theoretical knowledge and research are guided to the 'revelation' of a different personal and social condition of the young criminal and finally in this way we end up verifying and clarifying the dominant values of society.

The prerequisite consent of all members of a society, regarding which action is criminal and which isn't, is open to discussion. What takes place in every society is the conflict between groups with conflicting interests. When a social group prevails in this conflict, then its own evaluations of what is bad and what is good for society prevail. These evaluations are transformed into formal rules which define the orientation of action for the rest of the people. In this way, laws are produced which in essence protect the interests of the ruling group but remain binding for all the rest members of society.

Conflict theories define crime as an action which casts doubt on a value of the dominant social group, an action that brings dominant morality into question. In a similar way, the individual who committed the crime, that is the person who violates such a formal code, is 'produced'. In case of infringement of the law, the deviant will be confronted by the mechanism of formal social control.

The way the police and the judicial system function permits successive filtering. A person becomes a suspect for the police when he has the appropriate guilty profile (e.g. person of low social status). He goes on trial and the penalty depends, as far as the margins of law allow for, on the extent to which his socio-economic characteristics construct the stigma of the criminal – therefore of the danger he or she potentially cause society.

On the other hand, if someone does not possess these features, if he does not 'appear' to be a criminal, he will not be a usual suspect and may be punished or not – if he ever goes on trial, with the minimum penalty. According to these theories (of conflict) it is only rational that such a criminal comes from lower status group. The same applies to a juvenile offender. Youth crime should be then approached as a social product of our society rather than a result of abnormal situations.

3. STATISTICS OF YOUTH CRIME IN GREECE

If we would like to sketch out youth crime, based on formal policies and police bulletins, we must first of all take into consideration the fact that there are specific methodological issues and difficulties, the most important of which is the limited range of statistics (only those for which investigation and trial took place are included). It has been mentioned (4) that prosecution depends mainly on the social origin of the young offender. Wealthy families compensate the juvenile victims of rape, as well as the victims of petty or major thefts and other sometimes more serious crimes, therefore no preliminary inquiry takes place and as a result these crimes are not recorded in crime statistics. More specifically, when it comes to the issue of reporting in relation to the offence, researches have shown that the possibility of reporting a crime to the police depends on the type of the offence, so thefts and robberies have the highest rates of reporting, while sexual offences have the lowest (5-7).

Ever since statistics were used for the first time as a research method in Criminology and figures were recorded either in statistical yearbooks, or secondarily in scientific researches, the following trends were detected till the end of 1970s:

→ participation rates of children aged 7-12, regarding total crime, are less than 1%, at least in the 1960s (8) and 1970's, with 'thefts' being the category with the highest percentage.

→ participation rates of teenagers aged 13-17, regarding total crime, reached approximately 5% and were stable throughout the 1970s, though lower than the rates concerning the period 1928-1932 for which there is a similar recording but for the ages 15-18, namely 8,4%. As far as the type of crime is concerned, almost all offences are related to the

Road Traffic Act, while crimes against property (theft) are the next category though further below. In this age group, impressive is the number of convictions regarding games of chance, while drug offences show no remarkable increase.

→ Regarding post-adolescents aged 18-20, it is worth noticing that they are the only category with increasing trends and a higher level of participation in overall crime, compared with the representation of this age group in the general population. As to the type of crime, Road Traffic Act-related offences have the highest percentage. Construction-related offences (houses without building permits), bodily harm, theft and drug abuse have also noteworthy percentages.

In the middle of 1980s, when figures coming from both police and court statistics were publicised for the first time, the following info has been collected, especially for the age group 13-17

→ In most categories of offences a stable or decreasing trend is visible.

→ Road Traffic Act-related offences are the exception, since in some years they represent up to 95% of the total increase in youth crime.

→ Due to the increase in Road Traffic Act-related offences, participation rates of juveniles regarding overall recorded crime show a slightly increasing trend, compared to previous decades (from 5% in the 1970s rose to 6,4% in the 1990s).

→ Recorded youth crime is neither systematic, nor organised and it has in principle an occasional character. In the final analysis, it does not reach an alarming level, whether in the qualitative or the quantitative sense.

→ Regarding the profile of offenders, almost all are male, and approximately half of them are foreigners. In the first position we find Road Traffic Act-related offences while theft follows.

→ An alarming finding, recorded in formal statistics, is the excessive increase in drug offences. Indicative of this is the fact that till the middle of 1990's offences ranged between 11-45 for the entire period starting from 1984, while from 1996 till 2002 they ranged between 217 and 473.

Especially for the 1990s, the following have been gathered (9):

a. There is a slightly increasing trend in overall youth crime. It concerns mainly children aged 7-12, while the age group 18-20 presents a slight increase as well. Teenagers aged 13-17 show stability.

b. Special penal laws and particularly Road Traffic Act are related to the majority of recorded crimes. As it appears in absolute numbers, Road Traffic Act – related offences are ten times larger, at least compared with the rest of crimes, throughout the entire decade and for the age group 7-17, in other words they represent almost 90% of the overall juvenile delinquency. However, if this finding is analysed for each age group, we will see that it concerns mainly juveniles aged 13-17. Juveniles aged 7-12 fall mainly into the category of offenders of the beggary law and this causes the great increase that we noticed previously. Indicative of this is the fact that the rate of juvenile delinquency, in relation to the age group 7-12, is ten times higher in the period 1991-1999, because of the beggary-related offences.

c. In the period 1991-1998, two categories of committed crimes, that is 'bodily harm' and 'offences against property' show a steady decline for all age groups of young people.

d. Therefore, when we talk about a rise in juvenile delinquency, in essence we talk about more juveniles aged 7-12, who were arrested for beggary. Furthermore, when we talk about the criminality of teenagers and post-teenagers, we talk almost exclusively about Road Traffic Act-related offences.

In any case though, the general conclusion that can be drawn is that the serious crimes committed by young people remain at a low level. The same conclusion is drawn from a series of researches of self-confessed crimes, in which it is evident that, despite the clearly increased percentages compared with the officially recorded ones; those offences are of occasional character and minor importance (10-12).

A more qualitative approach of research and officially recorded data, regarding youth crime, shows the following elements, which we must take into consideration.

→ The percentage of domestic violence, such as violence between siblings, maltreatment of parents by their teenage children and dating violence (all offenders are young), is noteworthy.

→ There is also a significant percentage of young people convicted of beggary. On one hand, some children work out in the streets and their parents tolerate this situation, since they otherwise would not be able to cover their needs, on the other hand, unprotected children are exploited by others, who look after their own interests and not the interests of children or their families. In Greece we call these juveniles, the 'traffic-lights children'. The latter are usually boys, aged 5-15, however lately appear many girls as well. When it comes to prostitution, teenagers and young adults, mainly women up to 22 years old, are also involved. Children usually sell small items, or beg or steal. They prostitute themselves, they take drugs or/and participate in the drug trade. They grow up next to groups that live in the street environment and a strong emotional bond develops between them and these groups. They have very few ties with adults, schools or welfare agencies in Greece. Other times, they live with other more powerful minority groups (e.g. gypsies), who 'protect' them, in exchange for a share of their profits coming from their particularly lucrative work, especially when this work is prostitution.

→ There is also the issue of alcohol use and abuse, especially of adulterated alcohol which is sold practically without any substantial formal control. The problem of alcohol addiction is however understated in our country, firstly because alcohol consumption is generally legitimate – an institutional frame for controlling consumption of alcohol by juveniles has been established – secondly because alcohol trade is a particularly profitable business, bringing in many billions and thirdly because the night 'industry' (nightclubs, etc) is based on alcohol abuse – mainly adulterated alcohol.

→ The almost only organised form of youth crime which has been recorded is football violence (hooliganism)². The phenomenon of hooliganism in Greece is related to the institutionalisation of professional sports, the projection of relevant foreign models and especially to the establishment of associations and clubs of organised fans.

² Although it is a serious, in a quantitative sense, social threat (13).

4. THEORETICAL MODELS OF ANALYSIS OF YOUTH CRIME IN GREECE

Juvenile delinquency is open to almost as many interpretations as many are the scholars who study it. If someone would like to codify these interpretations by reproducing the theories of criminology, he could briefly deduce the following: The image of a juvenile delinquent is restructured mainly on the basis of individual and social factors, as well as of pre-criminal situations. This young person has some 'special' individual characteristics (gender, physiognomy, biological factors, psychological factors and other elements of anti-social behaviour) or lives in a special environment. In addition, the extent to which the individual is dangerous depends on how vulnerable his character is to the criminogenic influence of adverse social conditions (in relation to family, education, eco-system, work, Mass Media, social class, ethnic or minority group). Furthermore, within the framework of victimology, the significance of problematic situations, such as neglect and maltreatment, are underlined, since they are considered to be responsible for the creation of circumstances that favour a causal relationship between the mechanisms of victimisation and the adoption of deviant behaviour. In all of the above cases, what becomes evident is a positivist frame of analysis. More analytically, if we want to categorise these scientific interpretations, we could use the following generally accepted distinction.

- **Individual positivism. Theories that underline Individual Factors**

It concerns a group of theories that attempt locate causes of crime, which they primarily trace in forces within the individual. Criminal disposition is focused either on biological, or psychological characteristics, or on a combination of both. Regarding biological characteristics, as these are depicted mainly in the lombrosian myth of the natural born criminal, the study of juvenile delinquency in relation to physiognomy, heredity, genetic or other organic malfunctions is more or less out of the sphere of contemporary criminological research. Exception to this is on the one hand Matsaniotis' research in Saint Sofia Hospital on juvenile delinquents and the XYY syndrome (additional male chromosome in the 23rd pair of genes), which showed a statistically significant percentage of delinquents, compared to the control group of the non delinquents (14). Nevertheless, there is no reference whatsoever to the fact that characteristics such as strong build and low IQ which are connected with the XYY syndrome, render these people more vulnerable to formal social control. Without being more aggressive than those who don't suffer from this syndrome, they have fewer abilities than the latter to evade location that is to remain part of the dark figure of crime.

On the other hand, the fact that many interpretations place emphasis on the psychological characteristics of the young criminal is indicative of their domination not only in scientific discourse but also in the representations that the agents of formal social control have, regarding juvenile delinquents. To be more specific, a public service whose main area of activity is the recording and the combating of juvenile delinquency in Greece, that is Probation Officers for juveniles, are asked to report on possible problems regarding the mental health of youngsters who are in 'moral danger', despite their lack of expert knowledge (15). As a result of this, the individual is identified with a sum of features which are not always rational, while tendencies, hopes and fears are projected in his/her image. In other words, the individual is being labeled, often arbitrarily, and confirm the dangerousness by invoking feelings of fear or/and pity.

The issue of mental health and its connection with crime, has been the subject of research of Alexiadis (16), Yiopoulou-Marangopoulou (17), Kokolakis (18) and Tsalikoglou (19-21). It is interesting that by using the term of J. C. Prichard 'moral insanity' (22), the law 2724/1940, in the frame of which the greek state deals for the very first time with juvenile pre-criminal dangerousness, regards the juveniles who wants to treat as 'morally deviants' and 'in moral danger'. Reference is also made to 'disturbances', "which include the main psychopathic forms, such as disturbances stemming from deviant characteristics, schizoid symptoms, aggressiveness, passivity, sociopathological disturbance which is the outcome of antisocial reaction to adjustment, sexual deviation, alcoholism, drug abuse, etc" (23).

Whether or not psychoses (endogenous and exogenous), mental illnesses and of course mental retardation are causally linked with youth crime is also examined. Especially for endogenous psychosis, namely hebephrenic schizophrenia, very similar to adolescence crisis, a specific reference is made. The schizophrenic, either simple, or hebephrenic, or catatonic, or mainly paranoid has been regarded as an extremely dangerous person, prone to criminal behaviour, invoking at the same time feelings of fear, similar to those invoked by the image of a 'monster'. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that in many researches schizophrenia was used as a variable, in order to produce statistically significant results that would explain the passing to criminal action. Such results, however, were not achieved. On the contrary, the view has been supported that "more schizophrenics can be found among non criminals, than among people with criminal behaviour" (24). Furthermore, certified psychiatric evaluations of dangerousness, which are a product of personal and not objective judgement, have been criticised. The psychiatrist – examiner is based on his experience. Even if such evaluations prove to be successful, they cannot constitute a scientific basis for the vague restriction of a person, which is considered dangerous. The meddling of psychiatry in the definition of dangerousness has no other effect than harming the reliability of these professions (25).

More complicated interpretative schemes in the realm of individual positivism can be found in attempts to establish a causal relationship between concepts, such as motives, instincts, and primordial repressed desires and youth crime. Unconscious endopsychic factors, neurotic conflicts and deprivations may pave the way to criminal acts. According to these approaches, there are two conditions of deprivation, 'due to restriction' and 'due to threat'. The first one does not lead to the commission of punishable offences. On the contrary, it is essential for the shaping and maturing of the personality. Deprivation 'due to threat', however, has a negative influence on the life of those under age, since it consists of 'answers', such as cruelty, lack of love, repulsion (26). Contemporary psychologists stress the following about juvenile delinquents (27): "Their mood is affected by various, violent, artificial, fast and not objectively explicable disturbances. They are characterised by irritability, distrust and they are oversensitive and emotionally immature. They manifest sadomasochistic tendencies, they are mythomaniac, impulsive, and they have a lack of moral sentiment and suffer from

maladjustment. Their behaviour shows 'signs of moral deviance', such as truancy, staying behind in lessons, running away, theft, malignant behaviour towards friends and animals and instability in their working environment. Their life, both sexual and emotional, is equally abnormal and unstable. They fall in love with passion, in a narcissistic and jealous way. They enter into quarrels and disputes; they make violent scenes, have separations and threaten to commit suicide. They are also inclined to kleptomania, pyromania, fetishism and exhibitionism. The beginning of the psychological procedure that leads to antisocial behaviour can be traced back to the first emotional deprivations. The failure in the oedipal phase underlies not only the inability to establish stable relations with the others but also the lack of a personalised superego. All these changes result in the adoption, without stress and without guilt, of the antisocial behaviour. The relieved urge cannot be restrained by any psychic mechanism, it breeds consequently a mass and uncontrollable stress which is reflected on an action – short-circuit, without emotion, thought and reason".

Finally, one more factor contributing to youth crime, which has been underlined within the framework of individual positivism and is of particular significance for the academic criminological discourse in Greece, is 'immaturity'. The latter's particular importance is stressed by the fact that a special reference is made to this concept, followed by a definition of it in Juvenile Law. "Immaturity can mean on one hand the inability to evaluate the significance of actions and the lack of consideration and diligence required for dealing with various matters, on the other hand the inexperience as lack of common experience and familiarisation with a certain circle of biotic relations". This 'immaturity' is a special form of an inner condition, which is hard to be conceived and diagnosed, due to lack methodological and analytical tools which can help the evaluation of the psycho-intellectual condition of an offender in certainty.

Thus, in this case the legal and criminological definition of 'immaturity' describes the feature of an antisocial personality on a purely individual basis, within the framework of studies which support the view that immaturity is the outcome of failed procedures of 'identification' with parents and socialisation. In this case, immaturity is explicitly connected with the egocentric character of the young person. The latter will aim at satisfying wishes, without taking into consideration the potential negative impact of such actions on others. The basic characteristics of the antisocial man will become part of his personality which will embody such attributes that under the proper conditions will favor the manifestation of antisocial behaviour. As Aristotle wrote about young people (28): "regarding morals, they are desirous and capable of fulfilling their wishes. Regarding their carnal desires, they surrender to their sexual urge without any restraint. In general, they easily change their minds when it comes to their wishes, they become satiated very quickly and while they have strong desires, these are satisfied soon and cease to exist, because young people have a strong will which however is not intense. They rage easily and behave improperly because they cannot control their anger. This is the result of their egoism which renders them intolerant to contempt. They love honours and most of all victory because they want to excel. They are passionate by nature, as if intoxicated. They exaggerate about everything, because they love too much and they hate too much, while they also think and insist that they know everything" (29). A model of thought similar to Aristotle's exists nowadays and manifests itself as a 'touch' of anxiety over the continually increasing deviant behaviour of juveniles.

Mainstream views which justify this position come from psychological studies. According to these studies, the adolescent individual experiences two psycho-biological changes that generate relevant shifts in social transformations. It is the phase of transition from childhood to adolescence, which paves the way of entry into the adult world. At this age, as well as in the first years of adult life, the young person is possessed with idealism. From a conservative point of view, idealism is nothing more than an 'immature' approach to social life. The young person condemns his parents' generation for arbitrariness and questions any kind of authority. Striving to achieve aims and aspirations young individuals turn to deviance, antisocial acts that offend established morality, property and status quo. Furthermore, the sudden growth of sexual drive and the way the latter is channeled into the behaviour of the young person is another aspect of the psychological function of youth. It is not a rare phenomenon, when 'immaturity' also includes lack of prudence regarding sexual activities, prudence that complies with the prevailing customs a 'mature' adult has adopted. In some cases, 'shameless' or 'vulgar' behaviours are transformed from concepts of social perceptions into "moral signs of deviance". Finally, one more element that distinguishes young people and has an aggravating effect on their dangerousness is the syndrome of 'being the best' in all social activities, a syndrome that renders them more active, in a way that disturbs, perhaps more often, the terms of normal social life (30).

The period of youth, however, is not dangerous as far as social life is concerned but also due to the biological and psychological weakness that characterises it. Due to 'immaturity' and the feeling of inferiority, youth is weaker than the other periods in a person's life, since in this phase a weakened power of resistance and a more developed tendency to imitate are observed. Moreover it is more vulnerable to messages diffused by mass media and literature. According to Vougioukas (31), cinema acts like a magnet for morally abandoned teenagers, who see it as an escape from their environment. They are susceptible to drug abuse, mainly because of "the uncontrollable urge for prosperity and the smugness that characterises them, the flood of temptations in contemporary society of abundance and the stress for success in life", as well as due to "the runaway tendency as a reaction to authoritarianism, the gap between the rich and the poor, materialistic values, anonymity, repression and the indifference of their environment" (32).

Drawing on these approaches we can conclude that the young person, whether portrayed as victim, or as a 'rebel without a cause' is still dangerous, precisely because he is young. Youth itself 'is' deviance.

• **Sociological positivism: Theories that emphasise Social Factors**

This theoretical approach underlines the importance of social factors as causes of youth crime. It is a mainly structural approach, since on one the hand it places little emphasis on concepts, such as individual choice and on the other hand, the significance of social conflict is not highlighted.

Within the framework of sociological positivism family is the most often mentioned point of reference. According to mainstream sociological positivism there is an explicit and implicit causal link between adverse family conditions and

juvenile delinquency. Theories that consider family as a factor of crime-genesis are mainly divided into two thematic sectors, depending on the way they approach the subject and the factor on which they focus their interest. The first perspective encompasses theories that attach prime importance to the field of interpersonal relations between parent and child and that deal with subjects, such as supervision, imposition, breeding and socialisation.

Within the boundaries of the second perspective, the factors that distinguish a deviant family such as the size, financial conditions, and the type of family, are considered important while reference is made also to the child itself, and mainly to the way the latter accepts, interprets and transforms these factors into behaviour. A common element of both perspectives is the psychological conditions of the juvenile delinquent, whether this is presented through a psychoanalytic interpretation of interpersonal relations, or through a psychologisation of social parameters.

In addition, both lay people and researchers are under the impression that education and cultivation can contribute among others to the reduction of crime. The basic idea is that school creates the right person, while illiteracy leads to crime. Illiteracy hinders proper breeding and the social preparation of the children. At the same time, teaching cultivates temperance in pupils; audacity and sloth are eliminated, shame and conscientiousness are developed, and the moral and mental horizons of the child broaden. Inside school passions are tamed and children learn to adjust to a wider social environment. In this way, they will adopt the virtues of the good citizen, moral integrity and submission to laws. Illiterate children, act under the influence of momentary urges and caught in a whirlpool of passion act as they would never dare to act, had they a sharper mind. Other researchers tried to support an explicit correlation between education and crime, therefore their interest was focused on more specialised fields. According to these researches, physical exercise and recreation have not only pedagogical but also deterrent value, in relation to deviant and criminal behaviour. Influenced by the works of ancient Greek philosophers (Aristotle and Plato), these writers express the view that "contemporary pedagogy acknowledges the reformatory value of physical training, especially of athletic activities for persons under age, and for this reason it seeks by these means to improve the behaviour of children, since team sports offer many true opportunities for the 'projection' of personality, which is freely developed and more precisely assessed. In addition to the above, recreation should be organised and take place in such a way that children get used in cooperating and are accustomed to solidarity, without getting morally harmed" (33).

Leaving behind the wider field of education, we pass on to the specialised topics of the quality of school education, in which we trace similar attempts at connecting the latter with a possible dangerousness of pupils under age, who either are indifferent to school and have very poor performance, have learning difficulties, demonstrate antisocial behaviour within school premises, or behave in deviant way due to school inappropriateness.

The hypothesis about a correlation between non-adjustment to school and delinquency has been tested by researchers. School failures and falling behind are aggravating situations that harm the process of the child's socialisation. At the same level, more recent researches and approaches have tried to establish a link between deviant behaviour and learning difficulties. According to this correlation, juvenile delinquents are characterised mainly in the first years of their school education by certain typical features, such as poor or medium school performance, learning gaps and of course learning difficulties. The latter are due to insufficient perception or expression, to brain malfunction and to environmental factors. According to the working hypothesis which supports this correlation, when a child is inadequate in the learning sector, compared with the majority of his class mates, he/she finds himself/herself in an inferior position because it is hard to compete. Negative feelings spring out and in turn analogous reactions, reactions targeted at classmates, teachers and family are brought about. In such cases, children are labelled as disturbed and maladjusted to school reality. The rest of the group rejects and marginalises them. This results in those children's aggressive behaviour, as a means of self-defence. At the same time, they become inclined to destruction, to running away, they suffer from phobias, depression and manifest many other neurotic reactions. Due to learning difficulties, such persons express antisocial behaviour at school.

At the same time, a person under age without any learning difficulties, who is however equally aggressive (bullying), is considered prone to adopt similar behaviour towards society in general. Troublemakers are disobedient, excessively energetic, undisciplined, and aggressive to others and along with those who cheat at exams or run away from school have access to means and outlets that will lead them more easily to deviant activities outside school. Besides, school is a microcosm and the roles assigned to and adopted by pupils under age are not considered much different than the social roles they will be expected to 'play' as adults in wider society, defining in this way their future.

A third factor traced by scientific research is geography, which constitutes an important component, as far as the designing of any partial frame of anti-crime policy is concerned. Taking into consideration the conclusions of the Chicago School, regarding disorganised neighbourhoods, Tsaousis and Korre-Crueger (34) showed that Peristeri and other west suburbs are the zones of the Greek capital's (Athens) periphery with the highest crime rates. Similarly, even in those 'stigmatised' areas within the city, differences in the type and total number of social problems were revealed. At the same time, other researches on areas with high crime rates showed that "most residents stated that they did not like their neighbourhood, less knew five or more neighbours and even less shared the same ideas and interests with those living close to them" (35). In order to explain the creation of crime zones within the same city, the concept of mobility has been used, which refers to groups of disadvantaged people who prefer those areas because they can afford to live in them (low rents, worse buildings, near industrial zones). The degradation of these areas is also underlined. There are no recreational facilities, no parks, no green spaces, no better and newly constructed buildings, while these areas are moreover plagued by problems caused by high density population. Finally, other theories focus on the population of these areas, on human relations and on the stereotypes that people form about the area. According to these theories, the above areas are characterised by delinquency because the residents face problems that create pre-criminal situations. Lack of work, security and friends, the negative quality of relations in general and the social status of the area, of course, which is low due to the negative evaluation of the residential environment. The result of this is not only that people who live in these areas form a negative self-image but also that others regard the children of these areas as deviant. The image of a child who lives in Peristeri is much different than the image of a child living in Kifissia (north upper middle-

class suburb of Athens). This image determines opportunities for work, the possibility to remain in the dark figure of crime or to slip back into crime. In Greece, the contribution of Zarafonitou (36) to this subject, especially regarding people under age, is significant. As she mentions, urban environments have been connected with rise in crime, due to the opportunities that they offer, as well as due to increased chances of escaping social control. The way of life within specific types of buildings has been blamed for the increased insecurity of the residents, the aggravation of interpersonal relations, the fuelling of nervous tensions, because of the excessive noise that creates favorable conditions for the emergence of violence (37).

Another factor whose influence on the adoption of criminal behaviour by youth has been examined is Mass Media. The latter, especially TV, instil and intensify anomie feelings into young people, which spring from the non-correspondence between the picture of an 'unreal world' that Media present and the ability to find the means to conquer it. Furthermore, the imagination of young people is stimulated, "their lower instincts are aroused and in general the direct impact on them can take the form of the extension of their identification with the heroes, even after switching off TV". A special reference has been made by other researches to the role of the models – heroes of TV and cinema and their influence on people under age, regarding the adoption of criminal behaviour by the latter. It has been underlined that when our personal condition is faintly similar to the condition of the hero, recognition becomes the principle of a moral decision. It is the projection of what we would like to be. In TV and cinema adventures moral morbidity, excessive luxury and easy living permeate most of the shows which are so lavishly offered. Young people identify themselves with the so called heroes of these films and the admiration of evil becomes a personal experience. The second category of mostly preferred shows are sex comedies. "These films are not as 'innocent' as they appear, because they offend moral values, institutions, the state and many times they tend to mock the entire spectrum of social life. They offer too little to the moulding of healthy characters, worthy citizens and cultivated people" (38).

Music has been criticised as well. Many theories which emphasize the negative influence of rock music on young souls have been developed. "The social – educative phenomenon of rock which emerged in the 1950s, would give rise to a huge wave mingled with mud, turmoil, blood and revolution. Thirty years later, rock music evolved into the most powerful revolution of bodies, spirits and hearts that ever came out of the guts of hell. In our times, rock music plays possibly a negative role. It is beyond understanding that healthy young people, by listening to the specific kind of music, are emotionally aroused and instead of having fun and being joyful, they react in an incomprehensible way, creating a social phenomenon and a universal problem" (39). Nevertheless, the dynamic role of other social factors that are falsely considered to be less significant than the mighty Mass Media, in relation to juvenile delinquency, while the opposite is the case, has been demonstrated. Contemporary researches have shown that the receipt of messages is based on difference and inequality (40). Young people from wealthy families prefer foreign songs and role-models, explosive beats, while young people from working-class families show preference to Greek role-models and listen to Greek popular music. At the same time, other researches question the reliability of research findings concerning the use of contemporary Mass Media that is passivity, hypnosis and the strangulation of critical spirit. Finally, theories about the 'vulnerability' of viewers under age are put in doubt by "various researches which prove that even ten year old children do not believe in any similarity between the stories of comics or films and real life" (41).

Any critical approach of Mass Media's influence, as a source of juvenile delinquency, should not diminish their active role in the creation of stigma, stereotypes and moral panic, through the strengthening of negative images, regarding deviant acts of persons under age. Cohen's research of the image of young British, Mods and Rockers (42), had shown that the creation of 'menaces to society' by the products of Media, justifies the stricter social control, constructing a virtual reality in relation to crime and forming a 'public opinion' that is afraid of its own victimisation (43).

Another factor which has been examined by criminological discourse in Greece is child labour, unemployment, underemployment or the occasional employment of young people, as well as the adverse working terms and conditions faced by the latter. It has been aptly remarked that young people who are on the margin of the labour market, become the focus of judicial attention (44). However, researches conducted in Greece (45) have shown that a great number of deviant youth have already entered the labour market and this number becomes even greater, when it comes to more serious cases of delinquency. Their working conditions, though, is not related to stable and full employment but to temporary employment, or underemployment or even unemployment. Moreover, these young people do unskilled, low-paid work, since they not only had any technical or professional training but also they often did not complete even elementary education.

Many other research endeavours are oriented towards the influence of immigration on the criminal behaviour of youth. According to these researches, those who immigrated while they were children are more deviant, while the second generation of immigrants, that is the children of the immigrants who were born in their second homeland, commit more crimes than their parents and their native peers, crimes of a different type, compared to those of their parents and of similar types to those of the natives. At the same time, they face problems of social adjustment also upon their return to the country of origin. An interesting study, of the social problems and the dangerousness of the Greek juvenile immigrants of second generation in Germany, has been made by Anastasiadou (46). In their second homeland, greek children, according to this study, live in a state of negation of acceptance and intergration of their cultural characteristics in the general functionality of social life and mainly the parallel negation of their treatment in accordance with the principle of 'equal opportunities' for all citizens. At the same time, their daily life has been 'ghettoized' even in terms of urban planning, they are not only emotionally but also legally insecure and often they experience an identity crisis which tends to become a permanent problem. In essence they live 'out' of society.

The same apply certainly to the stereotype of the deviant Albanian or the gypsy child in Greece. 'The children of the traffic lights' are regarded as and they are, in great majority, children of a minority. As criminality is considered to be

the work of Albanians, although researches have shown the opposite,³ in the same way not only the formal forms of social control, but also the peer groups are prejudiced against a gypsy or Albanian child (48).

Furthermore, in Greece political convictions and youth criminality have been studied as having a causal relationship. As Alexiadis mentions (49), the distinction between juvenile criminals and juvenile delinquents was made for the first time in the Ministerial Decree of the Ministry of Justice, No. 59719/35/ 2nd July 1949, according to which into the second category fall "mainly those juveniles, who were trapped by the tentacles of anarchist propaganda and because of their childish naivety believed in the subversive ideas, distancing themselves from the circles of Greece and under the influence of those perceptions, they gave rise to mutiny", therefore it recommends "their national edification and withdrawal from anarchist theories".

Finally, a group of theories and researches stress the influence of a group of friends or the participation in a gang on the adoption of deviant behaviour by juveniles. In other words, the group of friends and the 'subculture' of a gang appear to be factors of deviance and dangerousness. In more specialised theories, it has been also mentioned that a 'subculture of delinquency' is created by disadvantaged pupils – either due to cultural diversity, or due to social origin - who form or become integrated in 'groups of friends' of similar character. A special reference is made to the dangerousness of hooligan gangs and the issue of football violence. In some studies these groups are portrayed as a gathering of young people, who without prior acquaintance, unite to form a group on occasion only with a common 'ideal' of having violence for violence as is their motto. These children are described to be "suffering from a moral and emotional callousness and they do not want or they can no longer proceed to the slightest ordering of human values. It is usually the type of the vigorous young man with an extremely low in principle mental, social and moral level who becomes dangerous, because his lack of judgement transforms him easily into an instrument and pawn in the hands of any cunning person... He is a puppet who carries out orders and obeys the 'leader' submissively... and since he knows, many times only out of instinct, that the only thing that he has is his physical power, he exhibits it in a challengingly ridiculous way but uses it in a dangerous way"(50). These groups of young people express themselves impersonally as a solid mass, within which their personality is totally alienated⁴. Moreover, the interrelationship between football violence and petty robberies (bag snatchers), assaults and drug abuse has been supported by research findings (52).

Another important research, which was carried out by Astrinakis and Stylianoudi (53) in West Attica (Prefecture of Athens and suburbs) from January of 1992 till the summer of 1993, concerns the subcultures of heavy metal, rockabilly and fanatic football fans. They conclude that the specific subcultures or the cultural systems of music and sports dominate as fundamental collective and locally established institutions of leisure and entertainment. However, the emphasis on leisure and entertainment leads, in certain cases, the members of the subcultural groupings to instrumental and acquisitive delinquency. Indeed, as Astrinakis points out "collective juvenile delinquency, at least in most districts of West Attica, does not have an autonomous basis of existence and functionality; it does not have its own hypostasis. At the same time, however, we see the development of first and foremost an expressive-conflictual and secondly of an instrumental delinquency of a relatively wide range, which constitutes an integral characteristic of notional contents, the way of life and the activities of youth formations that have above all a subcultural character but also of those that are simply part of what we define as general and dominant youth culture" (54).

More specifically, regarding the 'heavy metal' groups which constitute the prevailing subcultural 'variation', it is stressed that "due to the chaotic and riotous, dionysiac or negative and nihilistic character of some of its subcultural models, heavy metal has contributed to expression and has possibly stimulated already activated processes of different etiology in a small minority of groups or people of the youth community in the direction of three basic types of deviation and delinquency. The first type, inspired by romantic and crude anarchism, results in expressive and conflictual forms of delinquency... The second type is reflected upon forms of sexual deviation and delinquency. The third type, fueled by the models of negation and nihilism, is manifested in forms of religious deviation and total dissent or alienation from the entire cultural system" (55).

• *Victimological approach*

The standpoint of child abuse and neglect rose as a criminological issue under the influence of the victimology of the 'innocent victim' and is related both at theoretical and research level with the concepts of dangerousness and social-psychological problems. Indicative of this is the fact that the Greek State has set up a special agency, the Institute of Child Health, which over two decades does research on that issue.

It is noted that a high percentage of children who grow up in special psycho-social conditions, such as the children who are maltreated and neglected, face serious psychological problems and behaviour disorders. While most of the children, immediately after maltreatment, are passive and introverted, some others react in the opposite way, they become aggressive. The second approach concerns the long-term consequences of child abuse or neglect. The basic conclusion of all approaches that examine the issue from this angle is that "children who were abused or tortured in their family, or those who witnessed violent scenes between their parents, children who in their infancy or much later realized that they would never be accepted by their family, become antisocial and socially or professionally useless or enemies of society" (56).

Relevant researches have shown a special interest in the issue of abused or neglected children, who as parents, it is possible to form a 'deviant' family. Literature on this subject underlines that violence, child abuse and neglect are problems almost typical of people who had suffered similar treatment in their childhood. In order to explain the inheritance

³ At least regarding total crime. However, there is indeed an overrepresentation of Albanians, in relation to certain offences, such as theft and burglary (47).

⁴ As Kourakis (51) writes, many of the members of these groups approve of violence openly, desperately, even as a negation of a way of life.

of the abusive and neglectful behaviour from generation to generation, they used as a starting point the remark that people at all levels of their existence, try to understand their childhood conflicts and the disturbance of their inner equilibrium that these bring about in their adulthood. At this attempt, they recreate like actors on stage again and again the same conflicts, by neglecting or abusing their own children. For instance, when a child is crying, the parent normally feels the need to calm him/her down. However, when the parent in his childhood had been left many times to cry, while his parents were indifferent or beat him up, the same conflict is born inside him and it is the memory of this conflict that revives feelings of anger and disappointment. As the child continues to cry, the parent in a state of extreme tension repeats the familiar to him treatment: he hits badly the child. As the latter grows up, he/she realizes the injustice done to him/her and reacts in an aggressive manner. Such a vicious circle is responsible for the creation of a juvenile 'delinquent'.

Within the theoretical framework of Critical Criminology, though, the existing causal link between deviant behaviour and experiences of child abuse and neglect has been considered problematic. Along with that, the image of the juvenile pre-delinquent, who was and remains a victim of various forms of abuse, or neglect, can by no means be verified by research findings. The definition given by the system of penal justice, on the basis of which categorisation of victims takes place, is in contrast with the personal experience of the individual (victim). The concept of abuse is placed in a vague and obscure field of structure. However, in this way and also due to the diversity of the definitions of abuse-neglect, research findings are affected and the scientific character of approaches is questioned. The sample is often small and non representative, the significance of social variables is often brushed aside, while many times a retrospective interpretation of deviation at methodological level is achieved.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The public and scientific debate about the antisocial behaviour of young people is often limited to grey statistics and gloomy predictions. "Bringing forward arguments, in connection with moral order and the latent insecurity of adults, blurs not only theoretical analyses, but also the recommended measures for (any) crisis management" (57). Nevertheless, another reading of official statistics, at least for the last decade, leads us to the conclusion that juvenile delinquency is not so much the result of psychological or other individual peculiarities but has to do with social conditions and the access to means (motor-cycles) or the lack of means (beggary). It is mainly related to the visibility of the offence and the work of the prosecuting authorities and not so much to a particularly serious character of an action or deviant behaviour. Furthermore, there is a statistically significant group of juvenile victims (beggary, violation of the Royal Decree 29/71 regarding gambling), that the state categorises as 'juvenile delinquents', in order to protect them. A possible statistical increase in this percentage can result in a recorded rise in total crime, which in turn will lead to an increased fear of victimisation and maybe to an analysis of mechanisms of stricter repression or zero tolerance that will become the gateway of a vicious circle.

It must be understood that the child 'swims' in its immediate environment and sees the 'colours' of this environment. Within the history of the child's family and micro-social life can be traced the secret of his/her behaviour. Even crime is not such an unpredictable and sudden incident, as many people present it, but the expected result of lasting negative influences. In order to cast light on the invisible side of *passage a l'acte*, that is the symbolism which lies dormant in the activities of juvenile delinquents, we must convince ourselves that there is more to juvenile delinquency than an intention and a result. An 'internal conflict of values' is simmering, which sometimes is expressed with external symbols and other times it spreads its symbolisms in the form of action or the arguments of the offender. We must, therefore, sympathise with the agony (no matter how the latter is expressed) of adolescents to find their way and to orientate them in the world that opens up to them but seems to oppress and confine them. In this way they choose provocation and aggressiveness and they are often involved in games of violence, as a way of forming a stigma. It is as if the child screams at its parents that he needs them and asks for their attention but they do not 'listen'.

Moreover it must be understood that the child is not a small adult. The child is often punished simply because he/she 'doesn't look like the grown-ups' or because the Mass Media want to create moral panic through controlled 'crime waves'. Especially the status offences which constitute crimes only when they are committed by juveniles do not diminish but broaden the penal and social control, therefore age functions at the expense of the juvenile. In any case, we must neither adopt an exclusively causal approach of youth crime, nor feel fear of victimisation, in order to minimise their penal or social stigmatizing.

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