

From Victim to Aggressor. The Origins of Criminal Behavior

Cristian Dan

*“Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University of Bucharest, Faculty of Juridical and Administrative Sciences –
Law, Bucharest, Romania, danrcristian@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: In our current society, the situation in which certain people either have a genetic predisposition that gives rise to certain deviant behaviors, or acquire this type of behavior as a result of social experience, is increasingly being debated. However, it is observed that day by day, the crime rate increases exponentially, which leads to the confirmation of the validity of the second hypothesis to a greater extent compared to the first. As can be seen, certain traumas, deprivations, needs and experiences that the individual encounters during his life can give rise to socially unhealthy behaviors and can lead to the development of habits in terms of knowingly violating laws. The present work aims to analyze some such experiences that individuals accumulate in their childhood or adolescence and to make the connection between them and the criminal behavior in the adult life of the person subjected to such treatments by referring to the emotional consciousness of the subject, to the experiences and his feelings in a certain situation. Also, some conclusions at the end of the paper will aim to identify some solutions to avoid the generation of criminal behavior in relation to the reasons underlying its acquisition, presented along the way.

KEYWORDS: bullying, morality, Criminal Law, crime, psychology, theft, trauma, violence, conduct, prevention, combat, aggression, inhibition

The experiences that give rise to criminal behavior

Throughout history, the study of the lives of the many personalities who stood out for their aggressive, often terrorizing behavior has revealed that they suffered, for most of their childhood and adolescence, abuse from the society in which they lived. Whether they were exercised as a result of the noble titles or the social status of the aggrieved, it was shown that, in reality, precisely these abuses were the basis of the tyrannical way in which certain rulers chose to exercise their rights over the citizens (Marr 2012, 209).

From a psychological point of view, being subjected to mistreatment of any kind causes the subject to acquire a mental resistance to certain cognitive receptors and thus learn, over time, a natural resistance to sensitivity, this leading to characterized empathic deficiencies, usually, through a sociopathic behavior (Zlate 2000, 165).

One of the greatest dangers that give rise to illegal conduct in the adult life of the individual is the phenomenon of bullying which is characterized by aggression towards individuals lacking the power to defend themselves and which is present in society in many aspects, including in the virtual environment where, under the protection of anonymity, individuals learn quickly and from a very young age that they can get whatever they want from their peers as long as they can use the threat to determine a certain type of behavior from them (Horowitz and Bollinger 2014 , 28).

On the other hand, the aggression must not be directed only against the person who will acquire a similar behavior in his adult life, it can also be directed at close people whom the individual considers vital for his life. In this matter, a determining factor in the behavior of the adult is domestic violence, the abuses between spouses that the child or adolescent repeatedly witnesses can generate a similar behavior (Gătej 2021, 47).

In cases where the bad treatments are applied directly to the person in training, the more serious and the faster, the child or teenager will learn illegal behaviors by externalizing all

emotional experiences in the environment where they will feel the safest. This is how different deviant actions are born that the individual exercises within the group of friends, in the relationships between schoolmates, in those between students and teachers and, in general, in any environment where he will not feel restricted (Stănilă 2021, 83).

Another particularly important element in the formation of the child or adolescent is social inequality resulting from race or from physiological differences that lead to a difference in treatment from peers of the same age. In these cases, the individual learns that he is different from his peers and, therefore, that he will have to adapt as best he can against physical or social shortcomings, considering that the law is against him as it refers to the great majority (Butoi 2019, 217).

Among the most common factors that give rise to deviant behavior since adolescence is the financial inequality between peers within the same social group. In this way, the student learns illegal behaviors by which he tries to resolve these differences by proceeding to equalize the patrimonial level in relation to his peers (Boroi A. 2019, 145).

In any case, the social experiences to which the child is told, first of all, and later, the adolescent, determine to a large extent what kind of social behavior he will adopt in his adult life. Thus, different types of abuse suffered by him can lead to the development of antisocial behavior, to the total or partial lack of empathy towards his peers or can lead him to try to repair social or financial inequality of any form by committing crimes (Ioniță 2012, 187).

Crimes arising from social experiences

From the point of view of the social experiences that give rise to criminal conduct, they can be divided into categories according to the trauma suffered by the one who commits them as follows: crimes related to social experiences of a physical nature, those related to with social experiences of an economic nature and those related to experiences of a social or socio-cultural nature (Butoi 2019, 301).

Among the three categories, in the order of their criminalization, crimes of a physical nature are considered more important than those of an economic nature, and the latter have a greater importance in relation to those of a social or socio-cultural nature and are therefore criminalized of the Criminal Code in different ways, from those whose punishment results in many years of imprisonment, to those whose violation is punished more leniently (Stănilă 2021, 12).

In this way, some of the crimes of a physical nature that have as their object the body of the person who is affected by the illegal conduct are murder, beatings and other violence, killing, threatening, and these are punished much more harshly compared to other incriminated crimes. Also, they are often the visible result of abuses originating from the same type of actions as those used by the offender (Rotaru, Trandafir and Cioclei 2021, 46).

When we talk about hitting or other violence, we refer to the action exerted by a person on the body of another person with the clear intention of causing damage to the skin or internal damage, causing an infirmity or a deterioration in appearance (Toader 2019, 101).

Regarding the threat, this crime has the role of causing the threatened person a fear of a future act in order to affect him psychologically and thus immobilize him regarding an action that he could have done if he was not threatened or for to induce a paralysis of the person's will and thus facilitate the offender's action with regard to the respective victim (Mitrache and Mitrache 2019, 270). Killing and murder are aimed exclusively at the life of the person and have as a criminal resolution the clear intention of the perpetrator to make the victim die in order to prevent him from taking any kind of future actions that could endanger the activity of the active subject. As a rule, killers and criminals choose their victims based on common behavioral or physiognomic traits, such as those possessed by the person who assaulted them during childhood or adolescence (Bogdan and Șerban 2020, 162).

Thus, crimes of a physical nature committed against his peers create a state of social equilibrium for the offender, his behavior being explained both by the desire for fairness between his deeds and those endured by him from those who physically abused him during his childhood years or adolescence, as well as from the desire to stop such abusive behavior towards other children or adolescents (Duțu 2013, 299).

Another category of crimes is those resulting from economic inequality between peers that give rise to illegal conduct aimed at equalizing the economic status of the perpetrator by transferring property without the consent of the holder or owner, from the latter to that of the perpetrator of the crime (Ristea 2020, 222).

One of the most common such crimes is theft, which is characterized by the passing of an asset from its owner into the possession of the offender without the consent of the former, unjustly and unjustifiably as a result of the act of evasion executed by the perpetrator directly, spontaneously or planned (Cioclei 2020, 241).

But, in the matter of this crime, a very important role is also played by technology, because, nowadays, it is no longer necessary for the criminal to carry out his illegal acts in the physical environment, they can also be carried out in the virtual environment, if the active subject has enough digital information to commit such an act (Ioniță 2012, 200).

In terms of wealth accumulation through the execution of illegal acts, this can also be done through other types of crimes such as blackmail, embezzlement, tax evasion, various types of forgery, influence peddling and others, but for all of these the criminal resolution it generally comes from the material lacks suffered by the perpetrator over time in relation to his social experiences (Costaș 2021, 112).

Also, within this type of crimes stemming from reasons of inequality, crimes that defy the law are also born, such as insult, vandalism, incitement to violence, destruction of public patrimony and other similar illegal behaviors through which the perpetrator tries to balance his situation in relation to the law, considering it unfair in relation to his own social needs and, as a result of this fact, contemptible (Manea 2021, 103).

The last category of experiences that give rise to criminal behavior is that of social and socio-cultural abuses. As a rule, these types of traumas that create differences between members of the same community and that give rise to phenomena such as bullying or social rejection, create the opportunity for the future adult individual to commit crimes related to a certain social group, a certain category of persons or who have identical features with the persons who exercised the respective type of abuse (Cioclei 2021, 118).

The most common crime in this category is rape, which takes the form of forcing the victim to agree to have sexual relations without her consent, sometimes the offender also affects the victim's body in the process through the injuries resulting from immobilization and subjecting her to such sexual treatments (Tănăsescu 2013, 256).

Likewise, slavery is a crime characterized by forcing one or more people to perform unpaid work, without their consent, unjustly, by threatening future harm or by affecting or creating certain situations that favor blackmail. As a rule, this type of crime is committed against a group of people with the aim of repairing the behavior of individuals with common traits with those of the victims in the social relationships that the perpetrator experienced (Ionescu-Dumitrache 2021, 177).

Another crime resulting from social exclusion, but which is not so common, is that of violating the secrecy of correspondence, which can be defined as the act of intercepting someone's correspondence without that person knowing or having given their consent regarding this and which may come from the fact that, towards the perpetrator, members of his social community deprived him of certain discussions, of certain information or excluded him on certain occasions when aspects considered important by him were considered (Ionescu-Dumitrache 2021, 102). From a psychological point of view, this category of abuse gives rise to organized, carefully prepared or repetitive criminal behaviors, this aspect

resulting from the criminal's inability to adapt to the surrounding social environment, from his lack of skills to integrate into a group, or from the attempt to recover certain lacks that he suffered in childhood and adolescence, which makes crimes stemming from a social or socio-cultural trauma form a separate group of abuses compared to the others (Dogaru 2019, 125).

Conclusions

Criminal behavior has its origins in the way the criminal grew up and developed, in his emotional experiences during childhood and adolescence, in the situations he faced, in the economic, social and socio-cultural differences between the members of his social group in relative to the amount of abuse he suffered.

The most common cause for such deviant behavior is found in the actions exerted by the family on the future adult individual, the bad treatments applied to him giving rise to a lack of sensitivity, a deficiency of empathy and the permanent attempt to balance the situation through various manifestations of aggression in the environment where the individual feels the safest.

Another particularly important factor in determining criminal behavior is the phenomenon of bullying, more and more common nowadays, especially under the anonymity of the virtual environment where young people very quickly discover that they possess a certain power in terms of determining other people to behaves in a certain way desired by them.

Also, a particularly important component in determining the future actions of children and adolescents is racial hatred, which leads to certain inabilityes of social integration with regard to a certain social category, a fact that causes the abused to understand the injustice makes and in turn behave unfairly towards his fellows.

A particularly effective method to mitigate such a change in the development of individuals is to encourage them to participate in various psychological counseling sessions within the educational units they attend, where they can discover their qualities and the ways in which they can capitalize on them.

Another method with effective results, as shown in various specialized studies, would be that of introducing social integration, intercultural awareness and interethnic acceptance courses into the didactic activities of students of different compulsory education units.

Last but not least, the state could create certain departments within social assistance institutions, whose special task is to identify possible abusive cases of domestic violence, so that the individual subjected to bad treatment by the family or group friends to be able to be counseled regarding the abuses they suffer since the period of behavior formation.

But the most effective method to stop any forms of criminal behavior remains healthy education, and this can be easily applied in educational institutions, in social campaigns of public interest, in public institutions and, in general, in any aspect of the individual whether in the situation of the aggressor or in that of the victim.

References

- Bogdan, S., and Șerban A. 2020. *The Criminal Law. Special Part*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Boroi, A. 2019. *The Criminal Law. Special Part*. Bucharest: C. H. Beck Publishing House.
- Butoi, T. 2019. *University Treatise on Forensic Psychology*. Bucharest: PRO Universitaria Publishing House.
- Ciolei, V. 2020. *The Criminal Law. Special Part*. Bucharest: C. H. Beck Publishing House.
- Ciolei, V. 2021. *Criminology textbook*. Bucharest: C. H. Beck Publishing House.
- Costaș, C. 2021. *Tax Law*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Dogaru, L. 2019. *Criminology*. Bucharest: PRO Universitaria Publishing House.
- Duțu, O. 2013. *Legal Psychology*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Gătej, M. 2021. *Violence in the family*. Bucharest: Orizonturi Publishing House.

- Horowitz, M., and Bollinger, D. 2014. *Cyberbullying in social media within educational institutions: featuring student, employee, and parent information*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield in partnership with the American Association of School Publishing House.
- Ionescu-Dumitrache, A. 2021. *The Criminal Law. Special Part*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Ionescu-Dumitrache, A. 2021. *The Criminal Law. Special Part II*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Ioniță, G. 2012. *Crimes in the field of cybercrime*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Manea, T. 2021. *The Criminal Law. Special Part and offenses provided for in special laws*. Bucharest: Hamangiu Publishing House.
- Marr, A. 2012. *The World History*. Bucharest: Nemira Publishing House.
- Mitrache, C., and Mitrache, C. 2019. *Romanian Criminal Law. General Part*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Ristea, I. 2020. *The Criminal Law. Special Part*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Rotaru, C., and Trandafir, A., and Cioclei, V. 2021. *The Criminal Law. Special Part II*. Bucharest: C. H. Beck Publishing House.
- Stănilă, L. 2021. *Legal Sociology*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Stănilă, L. 2021. *The Criminal Law. General Part II*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Tănăsescu, C. 2013. *Criminology*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Toader, T. 2019. *Romanian Criminal Law. Special Part*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Zlate, M. 2000. *Introduction in Psychology*. Bucharest: Polirom Publishing House.