

AFFECT REGULATION IN DELINQUENTS: CHARACTERISTICS AND CHANCE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS¹

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This manuscript represents the overview of theoretical and empirical knowledge on the specifics of affective regulation in delinquents and the possibility and effectiveness of psychological intervention, produced during almost three years of author's work on the project "Crime in Serbia: Phenomenology, Risks and Possibilities of Social Intervention".

In the first part of the chapter research innovations and contributions on the characteristics of the emotional life of the offenders are shown. Also, the critical review of the used methodology and the guidelines for the future studies are given. Based on some newly opened questions, the doctoral thesis, which is now work in progress, was designed. Its main goal is to better understand the connection between trauma and delinquency through the phenomena of attachment and mentalization.

Following part is dedicated to the analysis of existing psychological programs and methods of their adjustment to the conditions and the system in our country. The studies on potential obstacles or support for the implementation of interventions in the community are shown. In addition, the psychometric studies testing instruments for assessing various aspects of affective regulation, enabling further research in the field, were presented.

At that end, clinical, educational and research recommendations are derived. The importance of psychological treatment in resocialization of delinquents, greater involvement of practitioners at all levels, sensitivity to gender differences and a need for greater system support to the researchers in further training, are emphasized.

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INTRODUCTION

Delinquency is highly relevant and often investigated phenomena nowadays. There are several reasons for that: 1. despite all the efforts to repress juvenile offending, the number of adolescents with antisocial behavior is still significantly high (Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996); 2. victimization is an important risk factor for many somatic and mental health impairments (Fortier, DiLillo, Messman-Moore, Peugh, DeNardi, & Gaffey, 2009); 3. people who commit violence are in increased danger of experiencing health problems or being exposed to life-threatening situations (Hrnčić, 2011); and 4. in addition to the fact that crime is expensive for the state and system, juvenile crime also bring the fear that future generation would not be able to build a better and safer future for all of us.

Different disciplines and scientific approaches are dealing with violent behavior in order to develop sufficiently comprehensive theory that explains rise and maintenance of crime and to be able to prevent and treat these phenomena. Thus, our research team in the Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research, composed of lawyers, sociologists, psychologists, andragogists, pedagogics and anthropologists, has adopted an interdisciplinary approach to the crime. One group of those authors is focused on researching juvenile offending. Some of their work could be read in recent publications: Stevanović (2015), Igrački (2012), Nikolić and Joksić (2011), etc.

The most important part of my work on the project "Crime in Serbia: Phenomenology, Risks and Possibilities of Social Intervention" was dedicated to supporting and expanding the attachment studies in criminal psychology in Serbia, to open or to discuss some scientific, but also some practical questions together with my colleagues, and to help in improving the methodological praxis in the scientific community in our country. Many different theories deal with the crime psychology, still attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) is one of those that are very popular and discussed between authors and it has important implications. Attachment is an essential human behavioral system, activated by stress, separation or danger, which purpose is to provide survival, comfort and safety (Bowlby, 1973). With increased age the child internalizes early experiences with attachment figure, usually mother, into internal working models of self and other (IWMs). It means that if mother was sensitive, responsive, caring and both physically and psychologically present, the child would probably develop a representation of self being understandable, lovable, worth, and IWM of mother as reachable, helpful and trustworthy. These positive expectations usually become generalized to the other relationships and situations and become the guideline for the future actions. On the other hand, a relationship with unresponsive, frightening and/or absent mother leads to developing of negative IWM of self as

unworthy, unacceptable, and hard to be loved, and IWM of mother as dangerous, unpredictable, and not understandable. Consequently, insecurely attached children will lack of trust to the others, would be less open to start and maintain relationships, probably will have more negative picture and less empathy for others, and have different problems in the interactions with others. Many researches have confirmed these suggestions (Van IJzendoorn, 1997). More important for us, more frequently negative IWMs have been found in children with conduct disorders (Deklyen & Greenberg, 2008), in delinquents (Fonagy et al., 1996; Van IJzendoorn et al., 1997) and significantly smaller percent of incarcerated people are found to be securely attached (Van IJzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 1997).

Attachment theory is also important for understanding the developmental pathway of other psychological aspects relevant to the field of criminological psychology. Namely, caregiver's behaviors of providing comfort and protection are the basis for developing mechanisms of self-regulations, such as mentalization and affect regulations (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002). In a recently published paper, my mentor Assist. Prof. Aleksandar Dimitrijevic and I (2012) summarized contemporary theoretical and empirical knowledge useful for understanding the association between attachment and emotional development and the roll of affect regulation in the emergence of delinquent behavior in children.

So, this chapter will present those efforts, results we got and list the implications and recommendations based on empirical evidences we obtained. Firstly, studies on understanding emotional life of convicted delinquent minors will be presented. After that, the focus will be placed on discussion of possible psychological interventions in prevention, treatment and resocialization of juvenile offenders and on my colleagues and mine work on validation of important instrument for assessment relevant phenomenon. At the end, recommendations for the legal, health, educational and correctional system will be given.

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL LIFE IN JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Supported by projects of Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research (47011) and Institute of Psychology (No 179018), my colleagues and I conducted a several studies on affect regulation in delinquents and children with behavioral problem. The first one (Milojevic & Dimitrijevic, 2014) dealt with not common attitude that delinquents differ from their peers in their lacking of affective component but that their cognitive side of empathy is well preserved (Baron-Cohen, 2011).

We compared the group of the 43 male incarcerated juvenile offenders with a 47 controls who filled in self-report and ability measure of cognitive empathy. The data showed no differences in self-report scores of the affective component of empathy. Instead delinquents perceived themselves as less capable of taking the vantage point of

another person and, when tested, prove themselves to be inferior in perceiving emotions and facial expressions.

These results are important because they suggest that convicted minors might have developmental problems in perceiving and understanding emotions and minds of others and could emphasize a need to help them to improve, (re)build their capacities in order to prevent or to treat violent behavior. It is important to note that the weaknesses of this and similar studies that use self-report measures are that we investigate subject's perceptions and traits but not capacities and abilities. That is why we also cannot say that delinquents have no impairment in capacity to react properly on the mental states of others, just that they perceive themselves on the same level in affect response as their peers do for themselves.

Another research done in cooperation with prof. Svenja Taubner from University in Klagenfurt, Austria, was investigating the attachment style and parents' (dis)appearance in male delinquents (Milojevic, Taubner & Dimitrijevic, under review). This study confirmed previous findings on the relation between attachment avoidance (negative IWM of others) and externalizing or delinquent behavior (Allen et al. 2002). Our results may point to a vicious circle of parental absence in combination with rejective parental behavior and in turn avoidant attachment strategies of the delinquent adolescents. But it also could suggest that maybe differential pathways may lead to 1) delinquency in general, being related to avoidance towards mothers, and 2) violent criminal behavior, being related to avoidance towards father.

The idea of different developmental pathways to delinquency in general and violent crimes could be very interesting for understanding the nature of phenomena, but this hypothesis needs much stronger evidences in future. To establish this, we would need to conduct longitudinal research that could provide us with some data about possible causal associations. Finally, this study brings the father as an important variable in understanding specifics in emotional life of delinquents. It might be interesting that fathers are as absent in criminological studies as they are absent in the real life of the delinquents.

Further, the empirical results on emotional intelligence (EI) in juvenile offenders were presented during the International Conferences on Emotional Intelligence in New York, USA (Milojevic, Altaras Dimitrijevic, & Jolic Marjanovic, 2013). Assist. Professors Ana Altaras Dimitrijevic and Zorana Jolic Marjanovic and I sought to establish the trait-EI profile of juvenile offenders as compared to adolescents from the general (non-clinical) population. Study participants were 45 juvenile offenders and 54 adolescents from the general population. The two groups equaled with respect to years of schooling. According to the results of ANCOVAs, with age as the covariate, the delinquent group scored significantly lower on global trait EI, and on three out of four factors: Emotionality, Well-being, and Self-control. Thus, the delinquents exhibit lower self-efficacy when it comes to perceiving, expressing, and regulating emotions, and are more likely to have a gloomy vision of their present and future. Also, according

to *a posteriori* classification results, 73.3% of participants would be correctly classified into their respective groups based on trait EI.

Another question came to our mind – are the attachment style to both mother and father and capacity to empathize somehow related to peer-perceived behaviors and group roles in early school years? If so, these results could give us some valuable practical suggestions how to improve peer relations and problems in behavior in school aged children.

We asked 285 children aged 8 to 13 from four state schools in Belgrade to participate in the research (Banjac & Milojevic, 2015). The data demonstrate that prosocial competences are attributed to children with higher empathy levels and secure attachment, while children characterized as bullies had more negative model of others and lower emotion recognition ability. This may suggest that the child's experience in early relations with parents – mother's predictability, availability and security that allowed curiosity and courage to explore the world and relationships with other people in addition to father's sensitive responsiveness and acceptance – led to construction of positive self-image. This, along with developed ability of those children to accurately recognize and understand other people's emotions could be jointly connected with greater number of positive peer relations (Bergin & Bergin, 2009, Warden & MacKinnon, 2003).

The findings about bullies are in line with theoretical assumption that the expectations of other person being threatening, dangerous, unpredictable prevents or distorts the experience of inner world (Allen, Fonagy, & Bateman, 2008; Bowlby, 1980). The children assessed as bullies can misinterpret other people's fear or sorrow as anger or aggressions directed towards them and therefore react violently. This finding can suggest that it is not only question about adequate reaction to other people's emotions (Warden & MacKinnon, 2003) but also inability to recognize them correctly, which could be in line with my own previous research on delinquents (Milojevic & Dimitrijevic, 2014).

Interesting result was that children labeled as sympathetic have more negative IWM of self in relationship with the mother. That could maybe be understood in terms that children who feel special vulnerability and fear of abandonment due to the feeling that they are not good enough have higher motivation and invest more effort to understand and satisfy other people's emotions and needs.

Based on this research, two major recommendations for educational practice would concern the importance of working with children on developing their ability to correctly identify their own and other people's inner states, as well as developing emotion vocabulary, and also involving parents in this process.

All presented researches might help us to better understand characteristics of emotional life of adolescents with antisocial behavior, although most of them are done on the small, but representative, sample of incarcerated convicted male minors in our country. This information emphasizes the already known fact that female offenders are usually invisible for the researches but also for legal, health and educational systems. Female violence is rarely differentiated in theory from male one and justice systems

usually behave pretty much extremely toward it – deny it or punish it more strongly than male violence (Chesney-Lind, 2002).

In our country there are very few authors dealing with this topic (e.g. Nikolić-Ristanović & Čopić, 2014) and this might present the line of the studies which still needs to be conducted. Together with my colleague Sonja Banjac, I presented characteristics of development, perseveration and treatment of antisocial behavior of female adolescents, particularly describing their emotional life (Milojevic & Banjac, 2014a). Association of female delinquency and insecure attachment, difficulties in developing mechanisms of self-regulation and empathy capacities, as the consequence of early family trauma was emphasized. We also offered the assumptions about the gender differences in the context and meaning of criminal act and about the inner world of the delinquents - insecure attachment type, mentalization level and degree of empathy development, so that this text could give some directions and open questions for future studies in criminal psychology.

Having in mind all the results and data we collected, questions still being unresolved and also some weaknesses and limitations of previous researches we conducted, I have started doing my PhD thesis "The roll of attachment and mentalization in understanding the relationship between trauma and delinquency" (mentor: Assist. prof. Aleksandar Dimitrijevic). Starting points were the following conclusions from the previous studies: 1. high frequency of early attachment trauma in delinquents, 2. greater presence of insecure attachment style and regulation mechanisms impairment in both samples of traumatized adolescence as in juvenile offenders, 3. lack of data about female violence, and 4. the need to include more objective and widely recognized instruments. Scientific question was: how do some traumatized children become delinquents and the others not, and what could be the developmental role of attachment and self-regulation mechanisms. We adopted this question for main study question – how do the delinquents differ from their peers from institutions for children without parental care in attachment and mentalization?

Participants were both male and female adolescence from correctional institutions in Serbia and from institutions for children without parental care. With a help of Institute of psychology and project "Trauma, Trust, and Memory" that is funded by German DAAD, we were able to give some motivational money to all adolescents that were involved in the study.

Again, supported by the project "Trauma, Trust, and Memory", several colleagues and I had the opportunity to pass the training for coding The "Reflective Functioning scale" (RFs, Fonagy, Target, Steele, & Steele, 1998) from the "Adult Attachment Interview" (AAI, George et al. 1996) and after that to pass the test and receive a certificate for being a reliable RFs coders. That gave me a possibility to use in my PhD these two measures that are at this moment the golden standards for assessing the mentalization and attachment in the scientific community. As we do not have any reliable AAI coder in Serbia at this moment, my mentor and I decided to also include a self-report measure to assess the attachment style. In addition, we asked the participants to fill in the very commonly cited instrument for assessing early trauma experience, which was also its first use in our country.

We are now in the process of coding the RFs interviews and in hope that we will find some financial support to provide the training for reliable AAI coders and be able to use all the data we collected. That would be scientifically important having in mind that the similar research has not been conducted yet, but also it would be valuable for praxis because it would give us clearer and more valid answers on the starting question.

This study was also a pilot study on gender differences in criminal psychology and we believe that obtained results will give some recommendations for professional community, and also provide us with some directions for the further researches.

DISCUSSION ON PRACTICAL INTERVENTIONS

Many studies worldwide showed the effectiveness of psychological interventions (e.g. Berlin, Zeanah & Lieberman, 2008). The overview of the most common and important programs was presented in national paper (Milojevic & Dimitrijevic, 2012), also for those interventions that are gender specific (Milojevic & Banjac, 2014a), and the western world praxis in field of prevention, treatment and resocialization of juvenile offenders were presented on the national conference (Milojevic & Banjac, 2012).

In the recent years, on the basis of principles outlined in the research, there has been development of attachment and mentalization prevention programs that mainly focus on reduction of school violence and bullying. The most notable of these programs, "The Peaceful Schools Project: A Mentalizing Social System", assumes that child should be seen as a symptom of social systems unable to mentalize (Twemlow & Fonagy, 2006).

Prevention program that is usually cited is "Mentalization based treatment" (Allen & Fonagy, 2006) which could be used in prevention work with adolescents, but also with parents from risk groups. The main goal of this program is enhancing the capacity to think on once own and others internal contents. It can be adapted for treatment of institutionalized adolescents, but also for work with their families (Asen & Fonagy, 2011; Bateman & Fonagy, 2008; Midgley & Vrouva, 2012). The condition for application in the family is the participation of all the of its members, but the results are directed to what the delinquent needs the most: improving the understanding of the psychological contents of each family member, rejection of coercion and punishment as corrective actions, improving self-control and regulation of affects in family communication etc.

One of the most famous and gender sensitive program is the "Multidimensional treatment in foster care", which is on the list of recommended interventions for treating delinquency (Elliott, 1998). It has been proved to be very effective in the treatment of delinquent girls (Chamberlain, Leve, & DeGarmo, 2007), improving their school success (Leve & Chamberlain, 2007) and reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies (Kerr, Leve, & Chamberlain, 2009). Recent research has confirmed its effectiveness in working with girls who were victims of violence (Smith, Chamberlain & Deblinger, 2012). This program includes accommodation of adolescent in foster family, which has been previously trained for the purpose of intervention. In the foster

care adolescent receives support, security and experiences the conditions that are the closest to those in ordinary life. He/she attends a regular school and has regular meetings with therapist. The important side is that a multidisciplinary team monitors and supports foster families, but also provides intense psychological help to the biological family, where adolescent is supposed to return after the program is finished.

On the other hand, studies of psychotherapy effects are very rare in Serbia in general, especially when psychological treatment of delinquents is concerned. To our knowledge, the only research of psychotherapy effectiveness in Serbian prisons is the one that is still in the process and which is carried out by our Institute colleagues (Dr. Jelena Želeskov Đorić and her team). Having in mind that psychotherapy itself or any other psychological intervention is unavailable for juvenile delinquents during their stay in correctional institutions or after that, initiating this topic becomes even more important.

During the project "Crime in Serbia: Phenomenology, Risks and Possibilities of Social Intervention" we conducted the studies that are possible in the present state system and that are less financially demanding, but that are nevertheless important for the development and implementation of psychological interventions.

In fact, when considering a strategy of prevention, treatment and social reintegration of certain groups or in education and promotion of certain models of behavior and life, the beliefs, attitudes and practices of lay people about certain phenomenon should be explored. For example, researches show that implicit theories about the possibilities of solving problems in close relationships are associated with the incidence of violence in these relationships (Cobb, DeWall, Lambert, & Fincham, 2013), beliefs and attitudes about health are connected with making decisions about the treatment (Hughner & Kleine, 2008) and the beliefs about the nature of intelligence are associated with academic achievement (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007).

That is why the aim of our study was to investigate the implicit theories about the causes of juvenile delinquency in lay people; possible gender, education or age differences; as well as the link between previous contacts with the convicted adolescents and these theories (Milojevic, Banjac & Želeskov Đorić, 2015). For the purpose of this study we construed "The Implicit Theories of Delinquency questionnaire" that participants filled in. Before they saw instrument's items, participants were asked to write in their own words what they consider to be the main causes of antisocial behavior in adolescents.

Six theoretically explicable implicit theories of causes of delinquency were identified in the questionnaire (Bad social relationships, Low affect regulation, Traumatic experience, Biological factors, Bad value system, Spoiled), as well as the gender, education and age differences, while there was no connection between previous contacts with the convicted adolescents and documented implicit theories about causes of delinquency. Men emphasized the role of Bad social relationships and Bad system of value, and women gave more power to factor Traumatic experience. Higher educated people chose the Bad system of value more frequently as cause of juvenile offending, and younger participants highlighted the Bad social relationships.

The important thing is that participant attributed the least relevance to the factors Biological factor and Spoiled.

Qualitative analyses of lay theories that people freely wrote before filling in the questionnaire abstracted five somewhat different factors – Family problems, Social norms, Social learning, Excitement, Low affect regulation. The fact that trauma was not mentioned in those free associations nor extracted in previous studies (e.g. Tyson & Hubert, 2000) could be a signal that even though the trauma is often public topic and researches show the increase in prevalence of violence and abuse, this theme is still sensitive and incompatible with everyday thoughts about some phenomena.

On the other hand, participants emphasized the role and the meaning of crime in the life of the minors as a possible cause. Antisocial behavior could be a way to get excited, to defy the system or to fulfill the need for causing pain to the other.

These results could give us the direction for planning the intervention programs in community – for example, education and sensitization of people about the trauma and domestic violence and proper reactions in those situations; education of media about how important is that young people have of good social models and about the ways to make and promote them; continued work to build a better system of values etc. For the researchers this could be a suggestion to study the personal meaning of crime and what psychological benefits it brings to the delinquents. Also, these results indicate that participants perceive delinquency more as an outcome of difficult life experiences and conditions than innate characteristic of the person.

In this study we analyzed delinquent behavior in general, but results might have been different if we had brought some specific types of crime in focus. Also, variable "previous contact with delinquents" could have been more important if we had asked in which context participants met the offender. Those could also be possible directions for the future research.

The helping professionals, who work with delinquents every day in the correctional institutions, social work centers or in the health system, are the very important figures in the process of treatment. Many studies have showed that the situation in this area is alarming, and that, in short, helping professionals are not more empathetic than administrative workers (Radovanović, 1991, 1993; Žegarac, 1997; Mitić, 2007). In order to understand these results thoroughly we wanted to know whether they could also be applied to students who study to become helping professional, or this worrying situation occurs only after years of working in conditions that lead to burning out.

Therefore, we compared psychology students with students who have chosen non-helping professions in psychological features important for helping activities: attachment and empathy (Dimitrijevic, Hanak & Milojevic, 2011). The results showed the greater prevalence of secure attachment pattern, higher empathic capacity, better mentalizing, and more positive model of the other among the future helpers. These differences between student groups are present at the enrolment, with gender being

controlled. Finally, the prevalence of the secure attachment pattern and high empathy scores rises with the years spent at studying psychology.

These data could lead to a conclusion that psychology studies are chosen by persons with higher motivation and capacities for helping professions. Although women outnumber men, differences between the future helping professionals and others cannot be explained by the gender structure of the sample, since men in the helping professions have better results than women in the non-helping ones. However, we should pay attention also on the fact that non-helpers group was very heterogeneous in its structure so we cannot be sure that differences between students with different year of studying at different faculty represent a real picture as it would be if students from just one faculty were available for the study. Also, we should have in mind that psychology students may not be representative enough for the all helping professions, so we might limit our conclusion only on them. Despite that, these might be the evidences that problems do not exist from the beginning (that unprepared or inadequate people choose to be helpers), but that some other factors are related to the negative picture authors found in the previous studies. To understand better these factors we need further researches. This is a topic of great importance if we are considering how to help in treatment of delinquent, because first step should be to help those who work with them.

Another important thing is how the helpers perceive offenders and causes of delinquency, having in mind that implicit theories guide someone's actions and attitudes toward some phenomena. For example, the impact of implicit theories proved in carrying out intervention programs in different fields and professions, such as HIV prevention (Reid, Dovidio, Ballester, & Johnson, 2014), improving the legal status of illegitimate children (Maldonado, 2011) or to help children whose parents are in prison (Dawson Brookes, Carter, Larman, & Jackson, 2013). One study conducted during the project "Crime in Serbia: Phenomenology, Risks and Possibilities of Social Intervention" and presented on the international conferences (Milojevic & Banjac, 2015) specifically explored attitudes of the psychologists who would be involved in the process of education and prevention in the community, destigmatization programs and those who would be in charge to provide support and treatment to delinquents.

Study participants were highly educated laypeople (N=97) and graduated psychologist (N=81), and gender distribution in both subsamples was similar (42% of men and 58% of women). Participants completed already mentioned The Implicit Theories of Delinquency questionnaire.

Five components of implicit theories were identified using factor analysis – weak affect regulation, negative social values, traumatic experience, biological deficits and poor socioeconomic status. In both subsamples the greatest significance was assigned to factors traumatic experience and poor socioeconomic status, and the lowest to biological deficits. Two-factor analysis with age as covariate showed that psychologists less state negative social values and biological deficits as causes of delinquency, while male participants in both groups highlight biological deficits, traumatic experience and negative social values more than women.

Although psychological literature points out the significance of problems in affect regulation, helping professionals haven't brought up this factor more than the controls. Contradictory to previous findings, male participants emphasized internal factors of committing the crime more than women.

Of course, it would be interesting to analyze answers to open questions, which are not given in advance since only the questionnaire was used. Also, important variable could be if psychologists have worked with delinquents, to understand better for example how the work in correctional institution is related to attitude toward the juvenile offending.

Even though we should be cautious in conclusion faced by the limitations I listed, these results could give us some important knowledge useful in a process of developing the treatment programs. Some implications are useful for educational praxis. We could ask what psychology students learn about the delinquency. How are they prepared to work with this specific group of traumatized children who act violently toward the others. An important question would also be whether study curriculum entails some practical training and learning of skills, such as how to talk to people, how to find out what they need and what they feel, how to react to their feelings and demands or requests, what to do when they become overwhelmed by feelings which is inevitably occurring after every day work with people who are suffering. This kind of education could help later in prevention of burning out symptoms.

Also, we should think about those that already work with juvenile offenders, as it was mentioned above. They should be asked what kind of help or support they need – would it be some kind of additional education, do they need individual meetings that would provide them with psychological help, or some kind of group meeting that would enable them to communicate and ventilate emotions or to ask about difficult cases in praxis. This should be explored in the future researches.

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENTS

As it was noted several times above, methodological issues are the most often limitations and difficulties in the researches in our country. In psychological studies we lack standardized instruments and objective measures such as tests, experimental procedures etc. for which the trainings and/or copyrights are unreachable to our authors. The work on validation and improvement of the instruments could give us clearer and more useful results and enable communication and comparison with findings from other countries. This is the reason why psychologists from our team have joined the colleagues from Institute of psychology in the process of standardization of some psychological measures (e.g. Mededović, 2012).

Together with several colleagues I have been working on translation and validation of couple of psychological instruments. As we are in the middle of that process only one part of the data has been presented so far. During the psychological conference (Banjac & Milojevic, 2014; Milojevic & Banjac, 2014b) we showed the results on

validation of the "Reading Mind in the Eyes" test version for children and adolescents (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, Spong, Scahill, & Lawson, 2001) and Child version of the "Experience in close relationships" (Brenning et al., 2011). The first one, test of cognitive empathy showed weak psychometrical characteristics, even though it is one of the rarely available and popular cognitive ability measures. On the other hand, child version of very widely used and reliable attachment style measure in the western scientific world, The "Experiences in Close Relationships revised" (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 1998; adult version already translated and validated in Serbian in Hanak & Dimitrijevic, 2013) demonstrated very good psychometrical properties and discriminative and predictive power. This 36-item Lykert-type questionnaire has two versions - to assess the attachment style to mother and father separately.

In addition, we are currently working on translation and validation of The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Adolescent Form (TEIQue-AF; Petrides, 2009). It is a 153-item self-report measure yielding a global trait EI score and scores on four factors: Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality, and Sociability. Together with Assist. Professors Ana Altaras Dimitrijevic, Zorana Jolic Marjanovic and Aleksandar Dimitrijevic I am working on paper that will present the results of this process – the evidences of reliability and discriminative validity of the questionnaire.

We are on the beginning of the validation process of other psychological instruments. Some of the data will be presented in my PhD thesis, but also in several other master and PhD thesis and researches of colleagues that are working with us on this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The real value and relevance of scientific work is in its possibility to give us implications and guidelines for professional praxis. At the end, I would like to summarize and highlight the most important practical recommendations that can be derived from my work and work of my colleagues during these project's years.

Recommendations for improvement of scientific work in the field of delinquency:

- In order to conduct all the relevant studies, researchers need system and financial aid for trainings that would provide researchers methodological knowledge and skills that would help them to include the most suitable instruments and research designs.
- Certain conditions are necessary and essential for the work of researchers, such as access to the good databases of literature and the availability of magazines with high impact factors, availability of foreign conferences and exchange of information with experts in the field, scholarships for visits of foreign laboratories and universities etc.
- Practitioners, helping professionals who work with the delinquents, should be the part of the research team and help using their experience, knowledge and the insight from practice.

- System should support and encourage interdisciplinary project and cooperation with other institutes that would bring more comprehensive and more advance approach to the topic.
- Some directions for future studies are given, for example instrument validation, research of psychotherapy effects etc.
- Recommendations for educational field:
 - Affect regulation seems to be an important correlate of delinquent behavior. Valuable preventive actions would consist of programs that inform community, parents, teachers about significance of affect regulation for normative child development and provide them some practical guidelines how to support it.
 - We also gave some evidences about good preventive and treatment interventions that could be adopted in schools setting.
 - Studies on Faculties' curriculums are needed in order to improve the educational systems of future helping-professionals. We also emphasized the importance of practice in interviewing, ventilation of emotions, bearing with negative and overwhelming affect etc.
 - Participation of practitioners in education process of future helping professionals could fill in some gaps between academic and practical field.
 - Continued education of helping-professionals is also of great importance. They should be informed about contemporary theories and research results, directions of prevention, treatment and resocialization.
- Recommendations for the treatment of juvenile offenders:
 - Best treatment is early prevention! That implies early recognition of children and families in risk (the presence of domestic violence, absence of parents and caregivers, poor living conditions etc) and introduction of programs that aim to integrate trauma both in children and in parents, develop the capacity to empathize, teach parental skills and nonviolent types of interactions.
 - In the Anglo-Saxon literature and practice there is a tendency towards deinstitutionalization and more humane treatment of juvenile offenders - closing corrective institution of asylum type and referral of children in foster families that are supported by multidisciplinary teams.
 - Treatment and correctional programs must include psychological and psychotherapeutic interventions that would be focused on facing and healing the consequences of early trauma, (re)building of trust and attachment relationships, development of mentalization and affect regulation and learning social skills
 - Gender differences should be taken into account in providing a treatment! Professionals should be sensitive for the evidences that show that: female offenders were more often abused than male, and more often experienced sexual maltreatment; they usually commit crimes after victimization; they are overwhelmed

by feeling of helplessness and life-threat; their antisocial act is usually related to their relationship – they commit a crime to run away from or to keep the important relationship; they have a strong feeling of self-misery, marginalization and grievance.

- Continued help and support in process of rehabilitation that would decrease chances of recidivism - facilitations for employment, assisted housing, availability of psychological counseling and support after leaving the correctional institution, support and psychological help to family of origin, preparation of community to accept the former delinquent and support of his/her (re)integration, empowerment of social work centers etc.
- There are several different intervention programs which have proved to be successful, but to implement them permanently to our system we need studies of effectiveness.
- Good quality treatment should also include systematic support and help to the practitioners that work with delinquents – availability of individual or group psychotherapy, supervisions, group meetings for ventilation of emotions and exchange of experiences etc.

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AFEKTIVNA REGULACIJA KOD DELINKVENATA: KARAKTERISTIKE I MOGUĆNOSTI PSIHOLOŠKE INTERVENCIJE

Ovaj rad predstavlja rezime teorijskih i empirijskih saznanja o specifičnostima afektivne regulacije delinkvenata, te mogućnostima i dometima psiholoških intervencija, istraživane tokom skoro tri godine rada autora na projektu "Kriminal u Srbiji: fenomenologija, rizici i mogućnosti socijalne intervencije".

U prvom delu poglavlja prikazane su inovacije i doprinosi istraživanja o karakteristikama emocionalnog života prestupnika, ali je dat i kritički osvrt na korišćenu metodologiju i predložene su smernice za buduće studije. Iz nekih novootvorenih pitanja proizašla je i doktorska teza čija je izada u toku, a njen glavni cilj je da se bolje razume veza između traume i delinkvencije kroz fenomene vezanosti i mentalizacije.

Nastavak je posvećen razmatranju postojećih programa psiholoških intervencija i načinima njihovog prilagođavanja uslovima i sistemu u našoj zemlji. Prikazana su i istraživanja potencijalnih prepreka, ali i oslonaca u sprovođenju intervencija u zajednici. Pored toga, predstavljene su i psihometrijske studije provere instrumenata za procenu različitih aspekata afektivne regulacije, koje omogućuju dalja istraživanja u oblasti. Na kraju su izvedene kliničke, obrazovne i istraživačke preporuke. Istaknuta je važnost uvođenja psihološkog tretmana u program resocijalizacije delinkvenata, većeg uključivanja praktičara na svim nivoima, osetljivosti za rodne razlike i potreba za većom sistemskom podrškom istraživačima u daljem usavršavanju.

Ključne reči: delinkvencija, afektivna regulacija, psihološke intervencije, rodne razlike, praktičari, vezanost