

Delinquency of juveniles has been a cause for concern among societies for decades. Older generations take a dim view of what has come of the youth of today and are likely to blame them for more violations of law or principles of social coexistence than themselves at a similar age or indeed more than young people are actually to blame for. That is not to say that juvenile delinquency remains unchanged. Children and teenagers evolve with advancing globalisation and technology, and so deviant and criminal behaviours they commit will have taken new forms as well. Hence the need for systematic research on delinquency and demoralisation of juveniles. With sound, research-based knowledge it is possible to devise effective prevention and rehabilitation.

The research will **yield information on the nature of contemporary juvenile delinquency in Poland (by court files research)**. Thanks to it we will be able to determine the portrayal of a young person responsible for punishable and deviant behaviours (their family, social and school background) and evaluate the system of responding to such behaviours (both by judicial authorities and other persons or institutions, e.g. the school). The last research on a similarly big scale was carried out at the beginning of the 21st century, so it dealt with the previous generation of young people.

What is worth noting, however, is that both in global and Polish criminology there have been themes signalling new trends in juvenile delinquency, which demand deeper insight and further studies, especially in the Polish context. These are, in particular, a decrease, change of character and etiological factors in juvenile delinquency, an increase in the number of girls who committing punishable offences, a change in the definition of demoralisation (anti-social behaviour), a growing tendency to treat and punish juveniles like adults, as well as an increase in drug use and the use of other substances (e.g. designer drugs). The results of the studies of court files conducted as part of the project will contribute to creating a comprehensive monograph on contemporary juvenile delinquency (due to the research method limited to behaviours which provoked formal social control and the response of juvenile justice).

Besides, an entirely new perspective is necessary when looking at the problem: rather than relying solely on the data provided by the judiciary and characterising only those juveniles whose cases ended up in court, it is vital to carry out self-report studies whereby juveniles themselves will relate their anti-social and, potentially, criminal behaviours. Thus, a more thorough analysis is possible, not only of the formal family structure, but also, for instance, the relationship between parents and children.

The research results will constitute a valuable guideline for the legislator while devising criminal policy, since juvenile law is about to undergo a significant and long-term transformation, the next stage of which is being prepared. The results are of value also for those practitioners who will implement the policy.

The study proposed by us undertakes to describe contemporary juvenile delinquency. The characterisation will remain a valuable scientific resource for academics and students alike. Aside from this, the results may serve a useful practical purpose. They can be utilised by professionals working with the young or in crime and prevention of deviant behaviours, they will facilitate the work of juvenile court judges, police officers, prosecutors, social workers, teachers and educators working with young people. The material may be a valuable source of information for drawing up early intervention schemes as well as in social work with juvenile delinquents to prevent the continuation of criminal careers.

The outcome of the project will be publishing of at least 6 papers in journals and in other publications (edited collections), in this at least 4 in English, and publishing of the monograph.