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## Sociological Implications in Crime Prevention: Narrowing the Gap between Theory and Practice

(Sociologiniai nusikaltimų prevencijos padariniai:  
mažinant atotrūkį tarp teorijos ir praktikos)

***Santrauka.** Nusikalstamumo kontrolės teorijos ir praktikos šalininkai dažnai kritikuoja socialinės prevencijos metodus dėl jų neapibrėžtumo ir nepraktiškumo. Todėl politikai bei nusikalstamumo prevencijos strategijos kūrėjai pirmenybę teikia situacinės prevencijos priemonėms, kurių poveikis, siekiant eliminuoti nusikalstamumą skatinančias situacijas, yra lengviau pamatuojamas. Tačiau nusikalstamumo prevencijos tyrimai patvirtina faktą, kad prevencijos efektyvumas priklauso nuo pokyčių tiek fiziniėje, tiek ir socialinėje aplinkoje. Kaip rodo naujaisi nusikalstamumo prevencijos tyrimai, tik derinant socialinės ir situacinės prevencijos metodus galima sumažinti ilgalaikį nusikalstamumo lygmenį. Todėl „naujasis nusikalstamumo prevencijos mokslas“, tiriantis socialinės prevencijos reikšmę kontroliuojant nusikalstamumą, nukreipia kriminologų ir prevencijos praktikų dėmesį sociologinių teorijų link. Pastarosios nusikalstamumo priežasčių ieško socialinėje individo aplinkoje. Sociologinių teorijų, aiškinančių nusikalstamumo priežastis, gausa ir įvairovė patvirtina socialinių nusikalstamumo prevencijos metodų svarbą.*

*Sociologinių teorijų pliuralizmas kriminologijoje rodo, kad svarbu nusikalstamumą apibrėžti. Kartu išryškėja apibrėžimo reliatyvumas bei kintamumas. Pavyzdžiui, Christie apibūdina nusikalstamumą kaip sąvoką, kuri sukuriama tam tikros visuomeninės grupės interesams tenkinti. Kitaip sakant, nusikalstamumas egzistuos tol, kol egzistuos juo suinteresuotų, tiesiogiai ar netiesiogiai su juo susijusių, individų grupės (Christie 1982; 72). Nepaisant to, nusikaltimas apibrėžia įvairovę veiksmų ir yra tik viena iš deviacijos formų. Plačiąja prasme nusikalstama veikla turėtų būti apibrėžiama tokia veikla, kuri būtų laikoma nusikalstama bet kurioje visuomenėje ir kultūroje. Todėl nusikalstamumo nagrinėjimas siejasi su universalaus apibrėžimo ieškojimu, nesivadovaujant tik teisiniu ar elgesio sutrikimų aspektais, tačiau apimant kultūrinį veiksmo kontekstą. Šis ieškojimas taip pat atspindi teorinio nusikalstamumo dėmens svarbą ir glaudų ryšį tarp veiksmo apibrėžimo ir jo priežasčių išaiškinimo.*

*Galima teigti, kad kriminologijos mokslo šaknys slypi sociologinių teorijų prielaidose. Tradicinė nusikalstamumo sociologija remiasi žymiaisiais Durkheimio teiginiais apie anomijos („benormiškumo“, ar normų krizės) situaciją visuomenėje ir su ja susijusių socialinę patologiją, kuri, autoriaus teigimu, yra neišvengiamas bet kurios „normalios“ visuomenės reiškinys. Durkheimio mintis pratęsė kriminologinės „įtampos“ krypties šalininkai: Mertonas, Albertas Cohenas, Clowardas ir Ohlinas. Pagrindiniai šių autorių teiginiai aiškina nusikalstamumą kaip individų nesugebėjimo prisitaikyti prie esamų socialinių sąlygų bei ribotų galimybių pasiekti norimą tikslą (žemo statuso, ekonominės bei socialinės padėties) padarinius. Šiais teiginiais taip pat remiasi „subkultūrų“ teorija, teigianti, kad nusikalstamą elgesį lemia nusikalstamų „sub-kultūrinių“ grupių susidarymas (Vold et al. 1998; 167–168).*

*Meado simbolinės sąveikos idėjos atsispindi Sutherlando bei Gressey „skirtingos asociacijos“ teorijoje, kuri teigia, jog nusikalstamas elgesys išmokstamas siekiant susitapatinti su nusikalstama grupe. Matza sujungia šiuos teiginius, siekdamas atskleisti socialinę nusikalstamumo konstrukciją. Autorius teigia, jog nusikalstama veikla atliepia individo reakciją į neigiamą visuomenės požiūrį jo atžvilgiu. Millso, Scotto ir Lymano požiūriu, svarbūs*

pasakymai bei gestai, kurie naudojami apibūdinant individus ar jų elgesį. Neigiami, žeminantys posakiai ar gestai gali neigiamai paveikti individo savęs suvokimą ir vertinimą. (Cullen ir Agnew 1999; 88–90)

Pastarosios mintys plėtojamos Beckerio „etikečių kljavimo“ teorijoje. Ši teorija įvardija moderniosios „sociologinės kriminologijos“ pradžia. Beckeris teigia, jog nusikalstamumą apibūdinanti elgesį (pavyzdžiui, deviacijos) lemia neigiamų etikečių (visuomenėje naudojamų neigiamų apibrėžimų, apibūdinimų) „kljavimas“ indivi-dams ar grupėms. Visuomenės reakcija į šią etiketę sustiprina individo nusikalstamo elgesio tendencijas (Rock 1997; 257). „Etikečių kljavimo“ teiginiai atskleidžia glaudų ryšį tarp nusikalstamos veiklos apibrėžimo bei šią veiklą sukėlusių priežasčių. Nusikalstamumo „etikečių kljavimo“ įtaką visuomenės reakcijoms bei tolimesnes šių reakcijų pasekmes individų elgesiui iliustravo Stanley Cohen (Stanley Cohen 1972).

Vienas esminių „naujosios sociologinės kriminologijos“ uždavinių siejamas su galimybėmis kontroliuoti ir koreguoti nusikalstamą elgesį siekiant eliminuoti anksčiau paminėtas socialines priežastis. Žymiausias kontrolės teorijų atstovas Hirshi teigia, jog, kalbant apie nusikalstamumo kontrolę, svarbiausia atsakyti į klausimą, kodėl kai kurie individai nenusikalsta? Nusikalstamumą autorius aiškina susilpnėjusiais socialiniais saitais tarp indivi-do ir pagrindinių socialinių institutų. Hirshi ir Gottfredson teorinis socialinės kontrolės modelis sieja asmens savikontrolę ir nusikalstamumą skatinančią aplinką. Kiekvienas individas kitaip reaguoja į aplinką, o tai susiję su savikontrolę išreiškiančiomis asmens savybėmis. Pavyzdžiui, pagal Hirshi ir Gottfredson, silpnos savikontrolės individai yra aktyvūs, paviršutiniški, nesugebantys užmegzti ilgalaikių ryšių, siekiantys trumpalaikio pasitenkimi-mo. Tokie individai yra jautresni aplinkos pokyčiams, greičiau tampa deviantinės grupės nariais (Hirshi ir Gottfredson 1990; 4). Ši teorija yra kritikuojama dėl tyrimais nepagrįstos savikontrolės sampratos apibendrinimo: stiprios savikontrolės individai taip pat gali pasukti nusikalstamu keliu.

Nusikalstamumo prevencijai svarbūs socialinės kontrolės teorijos teiginiai, siejantys individo amžiaus poky-čius (individui bręstant savikontrolės požymiai kinta) ir ankstyvą jo socializaciją. Pasak Hirshi ir Gottfredson, silpna savi-kontrolė yra netinkamos ankstyvosios socializacijos pasekmė. Todėl socialinės prevencijos metodai pirmiausia turėtų apimti šią sritį. Daugelis kriminologų, ieškančių koreliacijos tarp teorijos ir praktikos, teigia, kad nusikalstamumo prevencijos strategijos kūrėjai turėtų atsižvelgti į teorinių teiginių įvairovę. Vis dėlto tokios teori-nių modelių įvairovės pritaikomumas praktikoje – abejotinas, pirmiausia dėl to, kad reikalauja ne tik aukštos strategijos kūrėjų kompetencijos, bet ir ypatingų praktinių įgūdžių.

Kita vertus, būtina pabrėžti, kad socialinės nusikalstamumo prevencijos praktika yra tas žinojimo šaltinis, iš kurio „semia“ žinias kriminologijos teoretikai. Daugiausia informacijos „nusikalstamumo prevencijos teorijos“ kūrėjams suteikia strategijų, metodų bei programų stebėjimas ir vertinimas. Toks vertinimo tyrimas turi prasmę tik tada, kai jis pagrįstas moksliniais tyrimo metodais, apimančiais tiek raidos, tiek ir rezultatų vertinimą. Tačiau mokliškai pagrįsti vertinimai dažnai yra nepriimtini prevencinių strategijų kūrėjams. Siekdami išvengti kritikos, politikai ir strategai verčiau atsisako socialinės prevencijos, kaip netinkamo nusikalstamumo mažinimo metodo. Mokliškai pagrįstų socialinės prevencijos programų vertinimo trūkumas riboja žinių, reikalingų socialinės pre-vecijos metodų kūrimui, generavimą ir perdavimą bei mažina pasitikėjimą socialinės prevencijos programomis.

The death of “the social” has been widely discussed by the contemporary researchers and practitioners working in the field of crime prevention. This claim could be supported by the studies of crime prevention describing social crime prevention as costly, hardly measurable and vague strategy of crime control. Analyzing the causes of diminishing role of “the social” in policy decision making, Western criminologists

point out the decline of welfare state as the main reason. In Central and Eastern European societies initiatives of social crime prevention were also criticized for their complexity and inability to bring about the desired reduction in crime statistics.

Academics raising the issue of the decline of social crime prevention tend to point out the lack of *sociologically informed crimino-*

logy in social policy making. According to some authors, this deficiency derives from the shortcomings of “proper” evaluation of social prevention initiatives. The “proper” evaluation should combine both, assessment of policy implementation as a process and cost-benefit analysis measuring the real outcome of these initiatives. The influential critique adopted by the American and British policy analysis was presented by Wilson’s essays on sociologically informed policy advice in crime control. In his writing, Wilson criticized sociologists for the value-laden theories of criminality applied in their policy advice, which brings about the selective value justification and unpractical crime control policy mechanisms. (Hope and Karstedt, 2003; 462) As a result, punitive policies in dealing with the raising crime rates became greatly favored by politicians, justice institutions as well general public.

The “new science of crime prevention” has now turned to advocate social prevention stressing the inevitability of sociological research in crime control policy design. This advocacy is based on the assumption, that emergence of criminal behavior should be studied in advance illuminating its key characteristics and then prescribing preventive initiatives adequate for these features in concrete situation and for a specified target group. The similar premises are dominating developmental criminology, which emphasizes the importance of *a priori* research defining risk-factors of criminal behavior in individuals, mainly children and youth (Farrington 2002).

Consequently, the sociological research becomes an important source of information providing knowledge for the social-policy advice, which should terminate the ignorance of social dimensions in crime prevention. This essay, therefore, attempts to examine, what sociological perspectives in criminology offer for the “new science of crime prevention”. It will demonstrate the development of sociological

thought in criminology from traditional to modern argumentation emphasizing the significance of theoretical approaches to the re-birth of “the social” in crime prevention.

### On Definitions

The practice of crime prevention demonstrates that in order to reduce criminal behavior, one first of all has to acquire evidence based knowledge about the context of its occurrence. The contemporary criminological trends theorizing crime prevention, underline the rationalization of social intervention founded on the proven correlation between the causes of behaviors to which this intervention is directed. Therefore, explanations of deviant behaviors provide the most important insights when designing methods to reduce delinquency. The variety of theoretical assumptions referred to in criminological theories enables to search for such correlations at the same time represent the potential for the “new science of crime prevention”.

The number of reasons evoking criminal behavior could be best understood by analyzing the broad literature dedicated to the explanations of criminality. The theory explaining the causes of particular phenomena inevitably leads to the definition of main concept. Crime, its causes and meaning of these causes vary from culture to culture over time and criminology has been plagued by its inability to develop cross-cultural explanation. However, the core concept of the theory of crime should be crime itself and, therefore, the general theory should look for the constancy, not variability of it.

“Crime is a concept applicable in certain social situations where it is possible and it is in the interests of one or several parties to apply it. We can create crime by creating systems that ask for the word. We can extinguish crime by creating the opposite types of systems”(Christie, 1982; 72).

Following this explanation, do we have to perceive of deviant children as victims of unfavorable social situation? Would we have to isolate all the large group of problematic children as potential criminals? Prediction in these cases is very weak, because it is an act of the past, which constitutes the basis for predicting the “problematic children”. Then, it is rather post diction then prediction. Hence, the conclusion for social prevention could be drawn, that involvement of children in social intervention programs could not be based on prediction of future criminal offences, but rather on the risks inbuilt in their social environment. One could also refer to crime as the result of situations and opportunities.

Consequently, the cross-cultural definition of crime should include the majority of acts defined as criminal in all societies. It should also avoid the pure legalistic or behaviorist definitions. The main part of this definition should derive from the human nature and motivated by the self-interested pursuit. Hence, crimes here are acts in which force or fraud are used to satisfy self-interest where self-interest refers to the enhancement of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Then, criminality would be a tendency of individuals to pursue short-term gratification without consideration of the long-term consequences of their acts. Referring to the above, the general theory of crime and delinquency is a theory, which sees crime as a short-sighted pursuit of self-interest and criminality as the absence of self-control needed to achieve long-term goals. (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; 176)

### *The Traditional Sociology of Crime*

Before exploring a variety of social explanations of crime it should be stressed, that sociology has always constituted the core of criminological theory. In fact, many contemporary criminologists base their theory and research on

sociological premises. Hence, one could claim that science of criminology has a strong connection to social theory. For illustration of this statement it is worth to remember Durkheim’s anomie – the situation of inadequate societal regulation resulting in social pathology. Considering, psychologists would be claiming, that delinquent behavior is a result of personality disorders and that state’s interest to reduce crime is reflected in politics, one could conclude, that criminology is a sub-discipline of social sciences. Even more so, ignoring the outcomes of individual developments through social processes, criminological theory would limit its scientific significance.

It is true that sociological theory of crime is rather a combination of various ideas and schools, sometimes interrupted by the empiricists. It is also true, that in this way theory become explicitly explanatory and open to different aspects and approaches, which makes it more applicable. Nevertheless, I will try here below to present sociological explanations as they developed over time and as they became more concerned with signification and control of delinquent behavior.

The issue of crime and control is pretty old in social theory. It goes back to the end of nineteenth century when Durkheim’s explained deviancy as a result of mechanic solidarity. According to him, the situation of anomie in mechanical society produced a setting of moral deficiency and opened up deviant opportunities. In this situation crime became a norm. Durkheim’s anomie was later adopted by Robert Merton, Albert Cohen, Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, who examined the fate of 1950–60ties young American men indirectly pushed to commit crimes by the restricted opportunities to achieve their goals in legal ways. These theories were named as *strain theories* in theoretical criminology. The main elements of these theories will be presented in the next paragraphs.

Following Durkheim's path of thought, Merton introduced five modes of adaptation to cultural goals imposed on individual: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. These modes were defined by the accessibility of institutional means when achieving cultural goals. Therefore, all of them expressed the individual responses to the situation of anomie. (Rock 1997; 238–240)

If the society was stable, Merton claimed, the most likely response would be confirmation, when both goals and means were accepted. The deviancy might occur in modes of innovation, when individual did not accept the existing institutional means for achieving cultural goals and seeks to find some alternative ones, or in the mode of rebellion, when a person did not accept the existing cultural goals and might drift into an alternative culture. Ritualism was rather a peaceful manner of behavior in accordance with established norms even disagreeing with the results. Finally, retreatism reflected dropouts from both achieving goals and accepting means. According to Merton's approach innovators would be a criminal, and retreatist would be a drug user and alcoholic. However, people who engage in crime are often also alcoholics and drug users. Therefore, strain theory leads to inconsistency with the facts about crime.

The latter explanations were adopted by Albert Cohen in his "subcultural deviancy", which also has been presented as a result of limited possibilities imposed on individuals by social class. Furthermore, Cloward and Ohlin tried to merge Merton's and Cohen's ideas and categorized lower-class youth according to the attempts to improve their economic situation and increase social status. They argued, that youth, who were seeking to improve their status and economic situation as well as the ones seeking just to increase their status were vulnerable to commit crimes. The most serious crimes, however, according to Cloward and

Ohlin, were committed by youth, who sought only to improve their material situation and did not care about their status. The ones, who did not intent to any changes, were "staying out of trouble" (Vold *et al.* 1998; 167–168). However, researchers seeking to measure long-time aspirations revealed, that individuals committing criminal acts tend to have lower aspirations than others (Hirshi 1983).

When transferring classical anomic ideas to the nowadays reality some authors noticed, that what was considered by Durkheim the state of anomie in society, in contemporary world is very much related to disorganization and politics of crime control. Both disorganization and absence of rule of law could be tolerated for a long time. For instance, a good example of this argument could be William Julius Wilson's description of violent and antisocial behavior in the poorest areas of American City or Stan Cohen's pessimism about the ability of state to provide "security, law and order". (Rock 1997; 238–240)

The founders of "differential association" Sutherland and Gressey explained criminal motives and skills as a result of *normal learning process*. (Sutherland and Cressey 1955) In the beginning of the twentieth century, Sutherland came up with conclusion, that deviant behavior was learned through the association with delinquent groups. He has based his theory on G. H. Mead's symbolic interactionism ideas. The core assumption of Sutherland's theory related to symbolic interactionism stated, that delinquent behaviors arose from the meanings given to these behaviors by *significant others*. The standard of behavior depends on the attachment to the group and association with *significant others*. The cultural conflict occurred, because different groups had different standards of proper behavior. Donald Gressey later clarified Sutherland's argument replacing cultural conflict with the normative conflict. The above was especially true explanation of juvenile gangs:

youth associated with delinquent peers, accepted the norms and values of deviant groups and learned the ways of behavior, which were approved by that group. However, not everyone, who associated with delinquent peers, became delinquent. In this respect Sutherlands theory remains unclear.

Sutherland's theory represented a new sociological approach in criminology. Ignoring the physicians and psychiatrists, he was the first to claim that crime occurs through the normal processes such as learning and association. In other words, he was the first to focus on social construction of crime. The differential association approach was widely adopted by the cultural and subcultural theoreticians (See Marvun E. Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti 1981).

The social construction of crime was well mirrored in David Matza's *Delinquency and Drift*. In his presentation of theory Matza molds well the anomie, control and signification stating, that situation causes deviancy and crime. According to him, delinquents are behaving in conventional ways most of the time, and it is only, when the social bonds and control weakens, the youngsters are exposed to deviancy. In other words, delinquent *neutralizes* the lawful values with the feelings of irresponsibility evoked by the juvenile court, denial of victim and harm, condemnation of condemners, and the appeal to the higher loyalties (Francis T. Cullen and Robert Agnew 1999; 88–90). Furthermore, these neutralization strategies create conditions, which *drift* juveniles into crime. *Drift* expresses the feeling of uncontrollable freedom and uncertainty, which leads to desperation and motivation to new experiences. In this case, experiences to commit crime.

The importance of symbolic interactionism becomes obvious when trying to clarify causes and influential factors of juvenile delinquency

through the socialization process. The latter is a leading concept of so called *signification criminological theories*. The core of symbolic interactionism here is based on assumption that people's behaviors are caused by their reaction to the world as *it is seen and perceived, not as it really is*. To put it in a simple way, the allegory of mirror would serve as a good example: people react to the other persons as to the mirror reflecting them. In other words, people perceive of themselves by the reflection in this mirror or the reaction of *significant others* expressed through various signs (gestures, language and etc). It also forms people's perception of the others and outside world.

Research on language used when defining delinquents has proved to be especially supportive for the signification theory. Mills, Scott and Lyman, found out, that calling someone deviant or mad, influences ones perception about oneself as well about the others, and behaviors of others towards oneself with attached negative label. (Ibid. 255) For example, it is enough to observe the language used to describe homeless children or children from poor families, which are often *labeled as antisocial*. Children with such social characteristics are often found amongst the registered offenders. Therefore, deviancy here is a socially constructed concept. Introduction of labeling theory by Howard Becker and his explicit research elaborated this conclusion.<sup>1</sup> (Becker 1963; 9)

### *The Origins of Sociological Criminology*

Introduction of labeling perspective indicates the beginning of sociological criminology in Europe (van Swaaningen 1997). Supporting this claim, Becker initiates a new discussion of the meaning of crime and refers to delinquency as a result of social labeling. Deviant, according to him, is the one, who has been named so by

<sup>1</sup> "The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label".

society and who has been treated by society as being *different, bad- deviant*. Bearing the consequences of being labeled deviant, individual naturally adopts the deviant manners and behaviors (mirror reflection). This marks the beginning of deviant career. The ambiguity of this theory is embedded in assumption, that every member of society is exposed to the negative labels, but the majority of them are able to resist the deviant career. Therefore, there should be either a specific situation favoring stigmatization or personality, which is more vulnerable to accept and adapt to this *labeling*. On the other hand, Becker was right assuming that negative social reaction encourages the development of deviant behaviors, especially in young age. However, no research has been made to prove, whether delinquent deviate because they have been stigmatized by society, or they are stigmatized, because of the misdeeds they commit.

The developmental approach was employed by Lemerts' primary and secondary deviation- a result of *consequential societal reaction*. The secondary deviation here is a consequence of not only public reaction, but it also incorporates the stereotypes constructed by the professional knowledge of justices' system officials, policy specialists, medical workers and politicians. Lemert draw a simple scheme of the social enforcement of secondary deviance developing from minor deviant activities, which receive social discouragement, to more serious crime punished by authorities and condemned by society. The outcome of this process is stigmatization and ultimate acceptance of deviant status.

In addition, Gary Marx noticed, that it would also include confrontations to the new security measures, which deprive delinquents off the future alternatives. Once the person is defined deviant, the persistent social reaction and legal measures create obstacles for him/her to

return to the normal life. Therefore, it is much easier for the stigmatized *deviant* adopt this criminal image and carry on the deviant career (Rock 1997; 257). It is very difficult to test labeling and criminal career theories, because they are both very much related to "subjective" perceptions of social reflections of crime, offender and labeling. The stigmatized individuals *drift* from the conventional society and create their own subculture. Although later subcultural theoreticians (Yablonsky, Phil Cohens) argued, that deviant subcultures did not address the causes of exclusion and roots of dissatisfaction, they did propose, that it provided strain release for disadvantaged young men.

Further, the major concern of sociological explanation was directed to the social capacity to control criminal behavior. The implications of control theory were dedicated to investigation of factors, which could prevent people from committing crimes rather than trying to facilitate the causes, which antecedent criminal behaviors. Albert Reiss and F. Ivan Nye presented early control theories in the middle of twentieth century. Both of them investigated delinquent youth to test their theories of the role of family and community in controlling delinquent behavior. Both authors placed and argument that the most delinquent youth received the least control of socially approved institutions. This argument was a significant contribution to the later control theories. However, the empirical evidence supporting Reiss's and Nye's theory was insufficient.

Travis Hirshi, one of the most prominent representatives of control theories, tried to persuade the scientific audience, that the most acute question is, why some people do not commit crimes. The difference between offenders and non-offenders Hirshi explained by the absence or weakness of social bonds. He named four types of social bonds developing from the weakest to the strongest: *attachment*, which

addressed person's sensitivity to opinions of others, *commitment* reflected person's dedication to conformity, *involvement* arose from persons belonging to conventional activity and *belief* indicated persons' compliance with the rules (*Ibid.*; 241).

Following this line of explanation, the type of social bond, which reflected the weakest social affiliation, evoked deviant behavior. The least the person was attached to the conventional society or social institute, the more likely he/she was to commit crime. Hirshi had also made an explicit testing research of his theory. The outcomes of this research supported the arguments of control theory. However, they challenged cultural and strain theories. For instance, Hirshi proved that at least the conformity of individual is weak; association with delinquent group did not necessarily pre-condition crime. In addition, he found, that educational and occupational ambitions of delinquents were lower than of non-delinquents, which was inconsistent with strain theory (Vold *et al.* 1998; 210–212).

In general, the undermining the non-delinquents and serious criminals in a sample hampered the control theory testing research. Furthermore, the problem of control theory was also rooted in ignorance of outside pressures thereby deriving explanations of delinquent behavior from the nature of human beings. This control theory also did not answer a very important motivational question: why some individuals deviated, while the others did not? If, according to Cohen and Short, delinquent impulses were inherited in every one of us, there should be some internal and external restraints preventing the eruption of these impulses (Cullen and Agnew 1999).

Hirshi and Gottfredson, who added to control theory, the concept of self-control and

impulsiveness, developed the idea of internal and external restraints. This idea was strongly related to outcomes of illegal activities, which were not adequate to the deeds, and, therefore, required exclusive characteristics, such as short-sightings, impulsiveness, insensitivity and etc. The latter are among the main elements of the low self-control. In addition, low self-control could be also defined by the search for immediate satisfaction of desires, ignorance of long-term goals and benefits, low values and skills, self-centeredness and indifference.

Furthermore, Hirshi and Gottfredson introduced a *stable construct of "low self control"* – outcome of inadequate socialization in early childhood. In other words, the individual differences of vulnerability to deviancy could be strengthened by the lack of training and discipline, ineffective and incomplete socialization. The adequate control is also considered an element of effective socialization in family, when children's behavior is monitored and deviant behavior is timely recognized and punished. This monitoring is time-consuming and requires parents to be dedicated and sensitive so that this external control would evoke the internal controls of young individuals. Research testing the influence of parental criminality on socialization of their children has proved that parents with criminal records fail to socialize their children.<sup>2</sup>

Based on the "low self control", which stays constant through the life course, Hirshi and Gottfredson presented various explanations of deviancy. They claimed, for example, that children with *low self-control* are likely to find similar friends, perform poor in school and work. This theory was strongly criticized for the difficulty to distinguish persons with *low self-control*, till they were not involved in *low self-control* activi-

<sup>2</sup> See West and Farrington, 1977 and Gerald Patterson, 1980 in Mike Maquire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

ties, such as crime. The other critical question would be, if the theory of *self-control* could be used to explain a variety of crimes including white color crimes (*Ibid*; 215).

However, practitioners of social crime prevention would confirm Hirshi's and Gottfredson claim, that impulsive and risk-seeking personalities are more likely to commit crimes, especially if they have grown up in an antisocial environment. What evokes some doubts is, whether authors believe, that impulsiveness and risk-seeking behaviors reflect low-self control and what exactly they mean by inadequate socialization. Moreover, the research needs to be done to prove the sustainability of low-self control during the life course. The concept of *self control* will be elaborated in the text below as one of the fundamental theoretical approaches applicable in social crime prevention.

Social control theory has also discussed the gender issue. In fact, the weaker social bonds of boys, especially visible in families, and more conforming role of girls explained the majority share of male offenders and illustrated the control theory very well. Moreover, John Hagan, stated, that excitement gained from committing offenses was more accessible for boys, then for girls, because they have always been under stronger parental control and emotional involvement to their families (Hagan 1985).

In some less significance for social explanations of crime, however, could not be ignored as attributed to control theories, are rational choice theories deriving from the old utilitarian approaches restored into economics of crime. The rational choice theories initially revoking Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, Cesaria Beccaria and James Mill, now turned to *economic man* without social and economic welfare pre-conditions. Ron Clarke explained crime increase as related to three broad arrangements of factors. The first group of factors was related to *target access and offender defense*. The second represented the *for-*

*mal and natural surveillance* and the third one dealt with *reducing the crime rewards*. All these groups could be practically facilitated and are easily accessible. For instance, police or employer surveillance, defending objects by fences, or setting control rules for certain activities. However, non-of these factors reflected sociological interest in offender and his/her relation to the outside world (Clarke 1992).

Mark Felson in some respect elaborated on Clarke's ideas expanding them in more sociological tradition. He demonstrated how crime arises in the routine of everyday life. Felson claimed, that criminals are similar to us, but "we are taught self control" (Felson 1994; 20). In other words, Felson stated, that crime was a precondition of everyday life. Moreover, there were two main conditions, which according to this approach might cause deviance and crime. First of all, individuals should have motivation and access to suitable targets and second, the appearance of the latter two was influenced by our everyday routine activities. For instance, parents working long hours lessen their control over the children and indirectly increase their opportunities to misbehaviors.

Felson's routine activity approach could be also applicable explaining crime in contemporary changing world. Even more so, in transition societies, where values and life styles of people have changed rapidly with the change of economic and political system, everyday life of society adopted different routines. However, this change did not evoke the personal changes, self-disciplines and control, which resulted in value gaps and produced the rapid increase of criminality in transitional societies. Based on these assumptions, relationship between individual behavior and social institutes such as family life style and children misdeeds could be explained.

Routine activity approach presents practical issues and expanding on it would be especially useful for crime prevention practices.

Nevertheless, routine activity explanations should be modified in accordance with changing societies. As the trends of crime changes, so do the motivation, targets and control. What remains stable is the assumption that the lack of any of the latter three elements could contribute to prevention of deviant behavior. Felsons explanation, however, missed the aspect of personality adjustment to the changing situation.

One of the significant parts of sociological explanations of crime is embedded in social ecology tradition. The predecessors of this tradition were Chicago school researchers examining the growth of the city and the impacts of urban development on population. The research mapped up on the city plan the slum areas or so called social pathology zones with the largest shares of mentally retarded, deviant youth and prostitutes.<sup>3</sup> The study concluded that these zones were also missing formal and informal control. However, despite the social disorganization in slum areas, these zones could also represent a surprising coherence and transmission of culture, traditions and values. For example, Shaw and Mc Kay noticed a significant preservation and transmission of deviant traditions from playgroups to organized criminal gangs.

Although representatives of Chicago school drew the city maps with high numbers of pathological inhabitants that did not mean, that those zones possessed the adequately high crime rates. Therefore, beyond the Chicago school, researchers focusing on the mapping crime of the city area, found out, that crime is concentrated in certain places. For instance, in his survey of calls to police in Minneapolis in one year, Sherman found that the robberies, thefts and rapes were concentrated in 2–3% of places (Rock 1997; 248).

The contemporary urban mapping has resulted from the recent research on the level of crime risks and controls in various areas. The researchers were concerned with the type of private and public security initiatives, a new stratification of people emerging from the access of wealthy to better protection and no access to protection for poor. This produced segregation of people confined either in prison or in secure private properties.<sup>4</sup>

Functionalist criminology directs our attention to the role of institutions, structures and interrelations of systems, which influence every member of society. The supporters of this approach were interested in phenomena of crime as much as it is attributable to the construction and sustainability of social order. Advocates of this theory presented deviancy and crime as an actor, which with invisible hand produces positive side effects. Moreover, crime, according to them, was a necessary condition for prevalence and sustainability of the current social systems. For example, Kingsley Davis, showed, that prostitution support monogamy providing an unemotional and accessible relieve of sexual energy and George Herbert Mead and Durkheim claimed, that trial rituals evoke social coherence (*ibid.*; 254). Except of Parsons, who claimed, that crime is dysfunctional for social structures, the majority of authors were guided by the flawed assumption, that crime can be constructive. (See Parsons 1951) If we turn back to the nowadays reality, and consider the proven facts, that prison does not reduce recidivism or prostitution does not reduce number of divorces, we could claim with confidence, that such a constructive *invisible hand of crime* does not exist.

Although each of the above-presented theories introduces a new sociological perspective

<sup>3</sup> See Faris and Dunham, 1939, Shaw and Mc Kay 1942 and Reckless, 1933 in Mike Maquire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

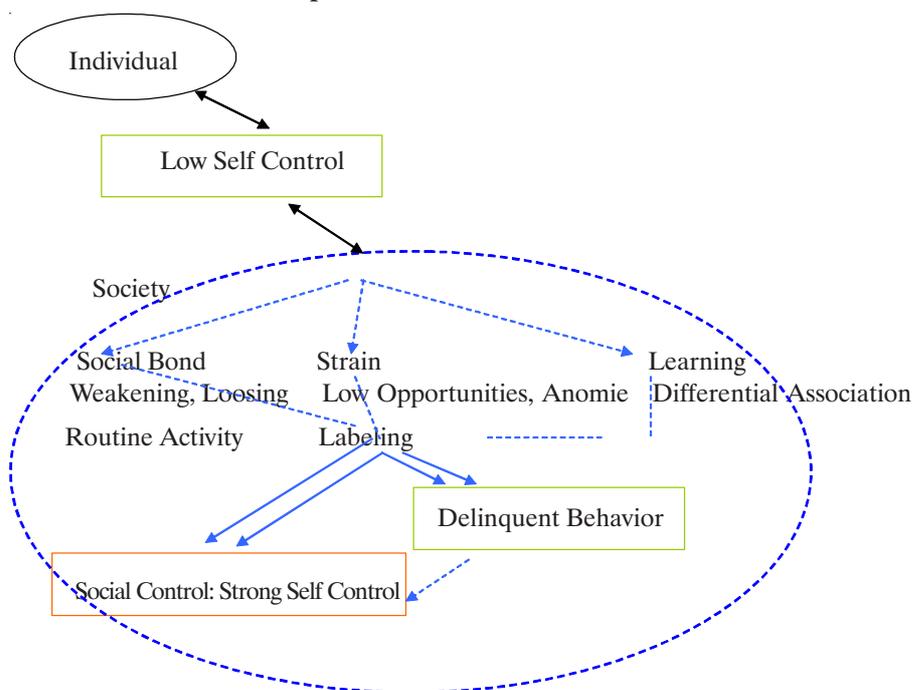
<sup>4</sup> See Davis, 1992, Ulrich Beck, 1992, Simon, 1987 and Simon and Feely, 1995.

in criminology, they also fulfill each other and create a complex of interrelated social causes of delinquent behavior. Looking at this complex of casual links on a very general level we would discover, that the majority of theories dealt with juvenile delinquency searching for the possible solutions to the problem. In addition, according to these theories, a typical juvenile delinquent would be: 15–16 years old male, brought in a poor or antisocial family (in some cases without a family), associated with delinquent peers, drop-out from school or performing low academic and vocational achievements, having weak or no ties to conventional society-community, church or other social institutions. Surely, this description is an exaggeration and not all the youth possessing these characteristics would persuade criminal career. Moreover, even if he/she was committing misdeeds in the young age, this does not necessary mean, that he/she will persuade a criminal career in the future.

Nevertheless, the fact, that social explanations of crime are targeted to the youngest group of population proves the assumption, that the interrelation between individual and social environment is the most vital for the development of young personalities. In addition, young individuals are vulnerable the most to both positive and negative changes. That is why it is so important to indicate the signs of aggressive behavior on children and try to prevent it at initial stages. Theories presented above drew several lines of dependency between individual and environmental factors, which may result in delinquent behavior. Integrating these explanations could provide useful methodological suggestions for the creation of interrelated and sequential model of social crime prevention.

The proposed theoretical model is framed between two, in my point of view, extremely important concepts of low and strong self-control. Hirshi and Gottfredson in “General Theory of Crime” introduced these concepts as the most

The Concept of Social Control: Strengthening Self-Discipline  
**Proposed Theoretical Model**



reliable explanations of delinquency and the most important targets of social control. The main goal of the book was, therefore, to “reunite deviance and crime under a general theory” elucidating the implications of how the crime was constructed, how it could be measured, what kind of people were prone to commit crimes and in what kind of institutional setting it could be controlled, and, finally, what were the most constructive ways of studying crime. (Gottfredson and Hirshi 1990; 4)

The graphical model represents the relationship between individual and society, incorporating the sociological explanations of development of criminal behavior presented by the theories above. The model, however, does not represent the chronological development of theories. Social control here constitutes the opposite concept to previously described social origins of criminal behavior. According to this model, individuals with low self-control entering society are exposed to the threads of becoming delinquents. The criminal tendencies might be strengthened by the limited opportunities when achieving the desirable goals, weak social bonds, attached negative stigmas, increased chances for delinquency in every day activities of modern societies, or learning delinquent patterns.

These theories elucidate the conditions necessary for crime to occur. It is not necessary, however, that individual with low-self control would become a prominent criminal, but he or she is much more vulnerable to the negative influences of outside world. Nevertheless, strong self-control could be also regained and developed by the means of social control. The important question of how it might be achieved could be answered when elaborating on the concepts of self-control and trying to understand, what are the main components of low and strong self control and how they relate to criminal behavior.

Before exploring the self-control concept introduced by Hirshi and Gottfredson, a very important division between crime and criminality should be made. In many other studies and even more often in official reports and statistics these phenomena are not clearly defined and are interchangeable. Hirshi and Gottfredson make an apparent distinction: crimes here are strictly referred to as acts violating the laws, whereas criminality represents the tentativeness of individuals to commit these acts. Criminality possessed something of the character of offenders.

From the point of view of prevention, crime is something to be dealt with trying to avoid the activity of law violation. It is not an instrumental part of the processes, but rather a descriptive part of it. The concept of self-control, therefore, becomes a core notion in this explanation of criminal behavior. Referring to the above, people differ to extend they are restrained from criminal acts, whereas criminality suggests that people differ in the extent to which they are compelled to crime. (*Ibid.*; 88)

The authors compare crime to other kinds of behaviors. The same as other activities or behaviors, crime satisfies human desires and provides an individual with pleasure. Political sanctions introduced by the state or laws imposed by the criminal justices systems eventually distinguished crimes from other behaviors. Referring to this definition of crime, individual chooses between crime and non-crime according to the amount of pleasures this behavior could offer. Therefore, crime serves to satisfy one's self-interest of seeking immediate and short-lived pleasure avoiding pains. However, in a long-term crime could also result in high level of pains resulted from the imposed political sanction. Referring to this, criminals could be characterized by easy and simple approach to life, seeking shortsighted and immediate excitement. According to Gottfredson and Hirshi,

individuals possessing these characteristics and behaving accordingly could one day become typical drug and alcohol users, typical robbers, typical thefts, typical rapists, and typical murderers (*Ibid.*; 25–43).

Putting the self-interest perspective in the context of socialization, the cultural dimension of crime occurs; according to which people always act in the interest of their group. This assumption modifies the explanation of crime complementing a unique individual self-interest for short-term pleasures with the motivation originating in the social group. The concept of group interest constitutes the core of cultural deviance approach widely shared by the number of criminological theories described above (differential association, labeling, social subculture, learning and conflict).

The definition of low-self control, therefore, requires no special conditions for the criminal acts, every one of us is open to the motivations, capabilities and needs to become criminal. Here the distinction is made between the classical theories of crime and contemporary theory of criminality. Every individual has different level of vulnerability to the situational temptations. In this explanation, however, the main argument is, that the lack of self-control does not necessarily embody crime. In fact, it could be neutralized by other situational surroundings or individual characteristics. On the other hand, according to Hirshi and Gottfredson, the high self-control could reduce the possibility of criminal offences. In other words, individuals with high-self control are less likely to become deviant.

Since the main concern of this study is to find the possible methods of reducing situational temptations, and thereby, strengthen self-control, the main elements of low-self control should be elucidated. The individuals with low self-control could be first of all defined by the wish to react to the momentary situations

and receive the immediate satisfaction of desires. Just the opposite, people with strong self-control tend to postpone this gratification.

Following the definitions above, the individuals with low self-control tend to be adventuresome, active and physical, and individuals with strong self-control are more cautious, cognitive and verbal. Since individuals with low self-control tend to persuade short-term pleasures, and are not willing to long-term commitments, they are inclined to have unstable marriages, friendships and employment. In addition, they will not possess strong educational and vocational skills, since the latter require long-term intensive training. Considering, that crimes are in most cases painful to victims, individuals committing them should lack sympathy, compassion and should be excessively self-centered and indifferent. However, they could be very open, communicative, and sometimes even generous.

We should remember that the definition of low self-control individuals is here constructed rather by the definition of crime and criminal. According to the theory, smokers, drug users and gamblers would also become the members of the “low self-control club”. In addition, the criminal act is often committed not to achieve pleasure, but to receive the relief from stress and frustrations of everyday life. Hence, individuals with low-self control have also minimal tolerance for frustration and are not able to control their physical responses. However, we should also hold to the assumption, that not only criminals could be low-self control individuals. Therefore, this definition is flawed by generalization, since not all the criminals possess the elements of low self-control and individuals with strong self-control elements could also drift into delinquency. In this case, the explanation becomes very relative.

Although, there has been a substantial research done to find the regularities between the

individual, situational and social characteristics, and the types of behavior, this approach supports the evidence of offender versatility. Furthermore, the majority of the outcomes of this research support the general elements of low-self control: stable individual differences, great variability, causal uniformity of criminal and non-criminal acts and inability to predict the specific forms of deviance.<sup>5</sup>

Differently from other modern explanations of crime, this theory suggests, that causes of low self-control are always negative. Actually, crime is the most serious and the most harmful consequence of low self-control. Consequently, crime resulting from low-self control could not be produced by socialization, culture or positive learning of any kind. Individual differences could affect the results of learning and socialization; making it more or less successful.

One of the basic conditions of successful socialization and development of strong self-control is an effective child-rearing model. According to the authors, it requires three minimum conditions: monitoring child's behavior, recognition of deviant behavior and punishment for such behavior. In any case, these three elements do not guarantee, that the model will function well. First of all, parents may not care for the child, or they may not notice anything wrong in his/her behavior, or even if they notice, they may not consider it as being wrong. (*Ibid.*; 97)

There are few guidelines, which could increase the effectiveness of child-rearing model. First of all, parents' attachment to their children could reduce the tendency of delinquency. Next, parental supervision is an important aspect in this model: close supervision results in the higher self-control and less tendency to commit crimes. This is where social control and

self-control interacts, and external control internalize. The recognition of low-self control is also very important. It is, however, very much related to individual family factors such as the internal order, chores and habits, as well personal characteristics of parents and children. Effective punishment in family has raised many discussions among policy specialists, because in some cases family punishment may result in child abuse. Since delinquent or criminal behaviors provide their own rewards, rewarding good behavior cannot compensate for failure to correct deviant behavior.

The effectiveness of these guidelines depends on the type and size of family. Low-self control parents would most likely fail to socialize their children. Of course, there is a number of exceptions and it would require a separate research to investigate the fate of children reared in the low self-control family. Moreover, the inadequacy in children socialization will most likely be a result of the inadequate parents' socialization. It is also important to clearly define what parents should recognize as deviant behavior of children. Lack of this definition could lead to inadequate reactions and hamper the socialization.

The current theory argues, that such behaviors as talking, pushing, hitting back, insisting on getting ones way, troubles at school and poor academic performance indicate the presence of the major individual-level cause of crime, that may be attacked, punished and changed. (*Ibid.*; 103) Moreover, children with low-self control would not necessary become delinquents, because it is not an inevitable result of low-self control. Indeed low-self control could be used to predict low-self control rather than to predict criminal behavior.

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<sup>5</sup> The search for regularities could be observed in Cohen's theory of delinquent subculture, Cloward and Ohlin, Blumstein (1986), Akers (1984), and etc. Versatility was supported by Robbins (1966), Hirshi (1969), Hindelang (1971), Ptersilia (1980) and others.

Further, research on the impacts of family related variables on the development of inadequate self-control demonstrated, that families with greater number of children or single-parent families have more difficulties to monitor children behavior. However, research does not measure, how the siblings can make an influence on the socialization of children. This might be a critical factor both in the development of low-self control and strong self-control children.

The next important institution in socialization process is school. School has some advantages in comparison to family. Although the effectiveness of children monitoring depends on the size and type of school, teachers usually have less problem indicating deviant behavior of children: poor performance and truancy are proved indicators of troublesome children. Next, school more than the family is an institution with authority of order and discipline, and, therefore, would be struggling to sustain and enhance this role. It has special mechanisms for this control such as homework; additional hours spend at school and profound system of rewarding (grades).

The difficulty of contemporary school teaching self-control is embedded in the lack of cooperation between family and school. Moreover, school authority is sometimes not accepted by parents, which results in tolerated truancy. It may also result in the low school authority and children dis-liking school as well everything related to teaching and learning.

The majority of sociological explanations of crime takes little account of the individual differences relied on by psychological theory. The current theory contravenes both approaches. First of all, because the level of self-control can distinguish offenders from non-offenders both before and after the criminal acts are committed. Psychological view is based on the attachment of personality labels to differences in rates of offending between offenders and non-offenders.

Moreover, there is no single personality trait related to criminality. The important conclusion of this theory, is, that people with strong self-control are less likely to become deviant regardless of their personal characteristics. (*Ibid.*; 109)

Differently from other theories, Hirschi's and Gottfredson's approach focuses on the images of crime when explaining criminality. Therefore, since crimes combine both long-term and immediate benefits, one should be careful when avoiding the image of an offender seeking long-term goals. The similarity between offenders and non-offenders makes it difficult to exclude some individuals from the explanation based on their race, ethnicity or social class. Moreover, since low self-control result in behaviors, which could be both criminal and non-criminal, one should be cautious when referring to deviance as exceptionally illegal behaviors.

The next issue to be elucidated by this approach is the development of self-control through the life course. The stability concept of this general theory of crime suggests that individuals with high self-control are less likely in any life situation to commit crimes. Moreover, people with low self-control sort themselves or are sorted by the others and exposed to circumstances correlated to crime. The differences in the degree of self-control could be reduced by the socialization addressing large scope of social factors and behaviors in infancy and preadolescents, social control in accounting for even greater variety of deviant and criminal acts, adolescents and legal (natural) control in adulthood. The long-term analysis of crime data showed, that some types of crimes peak at the same age and decline at the same rate with age. Moreover, the same pattern of distribution of offenders persisted and was invariant across sex and race over the long period of time. (*Ibid.*; 126)

The fact, that some of young offenders do not become adult criminals could be explained by the "aging out" concept. The latter means,

that social bond and self-control were eventually strengthened in the adolescent and pre-adulthood. The control and social structure theoreticians ignored this possibility. Matza and Trasler suggested that crime declines with the maturation, because social situation of individuals is changing. This assumption contradicts explanations of crime based on the personal characteristics and changes in behavior occurred with maturation.

Hirshi and Gottfredson disagreed with Matza's and Trasler's assertions, stating, that maturation reform itself is defined by the change in children's behavior regardless of everything else. They stress the important distinction between crime and delinquency: maturation cannot explain crime decline when delinquency remains stable. Moreover, it just proves the previous statement that the same measure cannot account for crime and criminality. Change in crime rates does not equal to change in criminality and, therefore, decline in crime with age may occur despite of criminal tendencies, which remain stable across individuals through the life course. The notion of self-control provides the solution to this dilemma. Either individual simply grows older sustaining the same level of self-control, which should not inevitably result in criminal offences, or their self-control is strengthened through the social involvement.

Summarizing, the concept of self-control supports the assumption that crime declines with age independently from criminality, whereas desistance theory claims, that crime declines because of change in factors related with age. (Ibid.; 137) Furthermore, concept of self-control contradicts the "social factor" theory. First of all, individuals with strong self-control would certainly be involved and influenced by the conventional institutions of society and, therefore, exposed to the risky chances embedded in their social situation. On the other hand, individuals with low self-control would resist this involvement there-

by avoiding influence, because it would constrain their adventuresome and irresponsible behaviors. Involvement in conventional institutions does not help to explain the reduction of crime. Even more so, girlfriend or boyfriend does not prevent, but may even encourage short-term pleasure seeking. Family and children demonstrate just the same case as job or partner. Therefore, we remain with the conclusion, that crime rates decline is a result of maturation of the individual.

There are also substantial self-control differences between males and female. This discrepancy could be first of all accounted for the differences in crime rather than criminality. The same could be noticed examining the racial and ethnicity differences in crime. However, the willingness to use crime opportunities derives from the level of self-control, which is established through the supervision in child rearing. This brings the argument back to the conclusion, that self-control is an important implication applicable for crime and criminality of individuals of any age, sex, race and ethnicity.

Social correlates of crime have traditionally been family, peer group, school, job and marriage. The latter were used to support different explanations and approaches. Referring to the approach of self-control, it is obvious, that individuals with low-self control would seek the same peers. However, such selfish and trust-worthless individuals cannot make good friends. Therefore, they would less likely be involved in groups with close friendship ties and strong-self control individuals. The group would, therefore, be short-lived, unstable, unorganized and whose members do not care about each other.

School is considered to be "the most responsible institution" in socialization. Labeling theory has dedicated much of attention in explaining, how grading system enforces delinquent images on children and how school

attributes to delinquency by internalizing the adult reaction to children behavior (truancy). Although the labeling theory claims, that labeling and stigmatization is independent of behavioral differences, the evidence shows that such labels are subjected to actual behavior differences. The responsibility of American educational system was analyzed by Cloward and Ohlin (1960), and Cohen (1955). (*Ibid.*; 160)

Finally, addressing school as a sanctioning system, it is obvious, that children with low self-control will have difficulty satisfying the academic requirements of the school in return for its long-term benefits. In addition, since their academic performance will not meet standards, they will also be more controlled by teachers. Therefore, such children will tend to avoid and finally leave the school for the less constrained surroundings.

The same fate could be predicted in employment of low self-control individuals. In general, low self-control employees would have worse work history than anybody else and, therefore, will be less likely to find jobs and keep them. Such employees are more likely to be absent without excuse, quit without notice, and misbehave. These factors are reflected in the job profile. The inability of low self-control individuals to maintain job is consistent with their inability to meet the long-term obligations such as school, family and job. Consequently, individuals the most in need of preventive control of family, school and friendship are most likely to be outside of these spheres of influence.

The policy implication of this explanation would be directed to strengthen self-control of individuals through the social institutions, which on their own turn should carry on the reform of their approach to this work. Therefore, the policy should consider the stability of differences in self-control across the life course. Next, it should be targeted on more than one act and

behavior that results from low self-control. In addition, it should be targeted much in advance before the act or behavior occurs. Finally, the policy should consider that the motive to crime is inherent in immediate gains provided by this act and that substantial changes occur during the life course in the tendency to commit crimes. (*Ibid.*; 256–258)

According to authors, the principal of teaching self-control, which could be effective (despite of the high academic skepticism), would be prevention rather than treatment. Moreover, it should be implemented early in childhood and adults do not have to be trained to provide such training. They should instead learn the requirements of early childhood socialization: to monitor and recognize the signs of low self-control and punish them. Therefore, effective and efficient prevention then would focus on parents and adults. In any case, state remains central crime-control enterprise.

The main problem of this theory and its applications for preventive policies is that it does not suggest the mechanisms of a priori identification of low self-control individuals. It only implies that the origins of low self-control are to be found in family in the first six or eight years of child's life. Moreover, effective strategy should focus on child-rearing practices that may produce self-control. Therefore, policies directed to enhance the ability of family to socialize their children are the only reasonable long-term approach to crime reduction..

Despite of all the contradictions evoked by the "General Theory of Crime", it represents a new developmental dimension (emphasizing child-rearing and socialization) in explanation of criminality, which should get its stake of attention in "new science of crime prevention", especially when addressing the issue of social prevention. Employing concept of self-control makes it easier to demonstrate, that not all the individuals are equally influenced by the socia-

lization process (learning and strain theories) and situations (routine activities). Some of them, the ones with strong self-control or without tendency to delinquent behaviors are capable to resist the negative influences of environment. Children, with low self-control, however, are much more vulnerable and may end up in crime while exposed to the negative influences of socialization.

In addition, it also implies that solution to strengthen low self-control through the socialization and social environment could compensate for differences proposed by social bond, learning and strain theories. The drawback of this model is that it is difficult to indicate the complex risk factors and then achieve such a complex change as to strengthen bonds, to teach children non-delinquent behavior and create equal opportunities for everybody. Moreover, these changes are inter-related and the effect could only be achieved implementing all the changes at once. The easier task would be to utilize situational approach and to make a change in the social environment of individual.

### **Social Control as Preventive Intervention**

The routine activity approach presented M. Felson in his book "Crime in Everyday life" could provide practical suggestions for this change. Following Hirshi's tradition, Felson was aiming to answer the question, why some people *do not commit* crimes. Therefore, he was studying crime as normal phenomena, claiming, that offenders do not have to be exclusively different from us. Referring to this approach, Felson was denying the fallacies, that for instance "weak families" or "broken homes" are linked to delinquent behavior of children. Indeed, he stressed, that the most important family factor in reducing children delinquency is parental presence: the real time that parents or adult members of family spend with children. Moreover, he stressed the

importance of family chores for children, which would not only occupy their free time and keep them attached to the house, but also make them responsible in the early age. (Felson 1998)

Felson claimed, that modern world created higher risks for youth crime. The modernization process and technological progress brought about changes in time schedules, transportation, as well household, which have consequently changed everyday life of individuals, their families, schooling and community involvement.

According to Felson, less parental presence at homes, accessible means of commuting, and household machineries provided for higher levels of independence and more free time, which contributed to the rapid increase of juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, family traditions and everyday activities (dinners) in the modern societies lost their regularity. Talking about youth crime in the USA, Felson distinguishes two general groups of reasons: the mistimed sexual development of young people and the discordant gap between end of the school day and start of family activities. (*Ibid.*; 24)

In addition, these changes were more obvious in the city, compared to the rural areas. For instance, public transport creates clear criminal opportunities for youth. It could be easily noticed in the city train station attracting street children and prostitutes. Moreover, public transport provides for the independence from parental chauffeuring and, therefore, results in less time spent with them. The youth's activities in metropolis are often assembled away from home to the unknown and not guarded environment. Community ties here are also much weaker than in the smaller towns, because of the great anonymity and mobility of inhabitants.

The time spent in school constitutes the main part of the day activities of young people. Studies investigating the highest time for youth crime to occur, indicated, that the biggest num-

ber of offences committed by youth is between 2.30 p. m. to 8.30 p.m. Considering, that school is normally finished around 3 p.m. one could predict, that those young offenders are either school drop-outs or just decided to leave the school earlier than their classmates. The other important implication of school influence on youth crime is the location. Roncek and associates confirmed that localities with higher numbers of secondary schools had also higher crimes rates. In addition, the temptation to steal increased when school was located nearby the shopping mall. (*Ibid.*; 111)

Even though, the research implies, that school could accumulate people at the early ages for offending and victimization, it also provides preventive supervision. Therefore, the implication derives from this, that children would be even more vulnerable to crime outside the school supervision. This is the main argument for mandatory schooling: school provides for the monitoring and punishment of children misbehaviors. The smaller is the school, the higher level of children participation in school activities, the higher student teacher and student-student involvement, and the higher possibilities of controls.

In addition, Felson claims, that part time jobs for young people in contemporary societies do not solve the control problem, because earnings from these jobs are often to cover recreation activities and extras, such as gasoline, that would help to escape the dependency on parents. The modern technology, mobile phones, Internet and television help to escape of informal controls, ease the coordination and advertise the goods increasing temptations of robbery.

According to Felson, reduction of crime is related to policies so called "designing out crimes". The latter include either the natural informal crime prevention as it occurs in everyday life, or planned crime prevention, which imitates the former. These activities would be

more effective when divided into smaller portions and linked with the crime-prompt situations. (School locality, design of public housing or shopping localized for more control). Felson calls this process of designing lower crime in everyday life, a strategy of "chunking and channeling". This strategy reflects the situational crime prevention related to preventing crime here and now thereby making crime targets less rewarding, accentuating risks evoked by crime, increasing efforts and guilt associated with crime. It does not mean crime displacement, but rather dispersion of benefits. (*Ibid.*; 164)

Juvenile delinquency prevention programs are frequently defined as practical tools of informal social control. Therefore, the elaboration of the issue of social control should yield a more detailed picture of how prevention could be approached. The different approach to social control was introduced and investigated by Stanley Cohen. There are two important works by S. Cohen both dealing with the topics of juvenile delinquency and social control. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* focused on the social reaction to juvenile subcultures and behavior of formal control agents towards distinctive youth resulting in stigmatization, increased polarization and, finally, criminal behaviors. The later publication *Visions of Social Control* continues the search for the solutions to the stigmatizing social reaction by the introduction of informal social control agents. Both works are interrelated and compliment one another with new explanations and convincing documentation. (Cohen 1972)

In his later book, Cohen asks a crucial question, whether some social policies that are introduced as measures of social control *do really represent* tools of social control. By asking this question, he differentiates between the formal social control represented by state institutions and social policy from informal social control executed through such agents as family, school and community.

The focus of social control in Cohen's understanding is related to rather broad expressions of social reaction to deviant behavior, which might be attributed to both prevention and repression policies. The uniform element of these social responses is that they are planned, programmed and organized reactions to socially problematic behaviors sponsored either by the state or by the professional agents focusing on either specific punishment of individual or community prevention measures. Therefore, discussion of social control in this context could be based on the discussion of prisons, courts, justice systems as well preventive programs, social policy initiatives on both individual and community level.

According to Cohen, the study of crime prevention programs should be first of all located in social space: the network of institutions such as school, family and broader patterns of welfare such as social services, bureaucratic and professional interests. Finally, the importance of Cohens' analysis is based in his attempt to locate social control in the future. This is a kind of fiction of social control trying to answer the question of: "where are we going to?" and "what is to be done?"

The justification of newly emerging methods of community prevention is based on both common sense and empirical research. Complexity of reasoning includes cognitive, theoretical and ideological beliefs, facts and ideas. More explicitly, firstly, the common sense knowledge suggests that prisons and juvenile institutions are ineffective and community alternatives could make bigger difference at less cost. Secondly, the labeling theories claim that the further the deviant is processed into the system, the harder it is to return him to the normality. Thirdly, criticism of the current bureaucracy, skepticism towards the governing authorities raises ideas of limited state intervention by prison and whole correctional system. Cohen compared social

control system to the fishing net where deviants are metaphorically compared to fish, which get caught by this net and is being cycled and recycled many times: "caught, processed and thrown back into the free water" (Cohen 1985; 42).

Three crucial problems are indicated in connection to this metaphor of the fishing net: quantity, size or capacity -or how wide the net, how broad is the research or how extensive is the preventive measure. The ripple problem reflects how this net affects the rest of the sea inhabitants. This metaphor simplifies the definition of social control and enables to approach the main aspects of preventive measures in a very comprehensible manner, which could be applied in empirical studies. (*Ibid.*; 43)

Referring to the above, the ideal of community control would be the decrease in size and reach of the net, which could be achieved through deinstitutionalization and supplementing alternative control mechanisms. When trying to prove whether *decarceration* strategy has reduced the numbers of prisoners, Cohen refers to arrest statistics in different countries (Britain, USA, Canada) illustrating the conclusion that the custodial institutions in those countries were expanding over time. Nils Christie also elaborated this expansion in his pessimistic vision of rapidly growing prison population, which, according to him, would soon result in new forms of gulags. (Christie 1982)

The grant solution offered to this problem would be diversion of so called "soft" criminals, for example, juveniles through the less intrusive control strategies either by dropping charges or by diverting them to informal social control agents such as parents, teachers, social workers, neighbors or casual observers. Such a diversion is a significant alternative enabling the control institutions to widen the "net of social control". Moreover, the clients of this diversion might not have committed crime yet. This early preventive diversion is incorporated into the system and

represents intensification and formalization of previous methods. In addition, this diversion is executed on the different levels of the system: diversion from adults to juvenile courts, diversion from stricter to softer programs, from old to new agencies producing deviants, constructing deviant patterns by stigmatization and labeling. This diversion then raises the question of causality between this system expansion and increasing crime rates. (Cohen 1985; 56)

From the ideological point of view, Cohen calls this the third revolution in crime control system: first revolution involved diversion from revenge to restrain, the second - from restrain to reform and the third one constitutes transformation from reform to reintegration. This reform is based on not only recruiting more volunteers, but rather greater direct involvement of family, school and various community agencies in the youth treatment and re-socialization and keeping the deviant out of the formal system of control. Moreover, these informal agents of social control become an integral part of the treatment and active player in children retraining. This active part varies from actor to actor. For example, school is much more formalized and, therefore, requires special strategy of helping young people to adjust without referral to the formalized institutions while saving the rest from disturbances. On the other hand, community requires liaison workers, who would attach themselves to individual clients. Such an "invisible hand" of social control entails a vision of how an ideal family, school or community should look like. (*Ibid.*; 57-58)

The successful social control program requires testing and more evaluation research, which establishes the power to classify the offenders by expanding on wider populations. One of the forms of such classification is embedded in spatial displacement of clients. Cohen differentiates between exclusion and inclusion. Exclusion occurs, when deviants are displaced

from their natural social environments and separated into special classes or other special spaces. Exclusive treatment is much more stigmatizing and segregating.

However, it could propose a real solution to "visible crime control", for instance, by eliminating youth gangs from the streets. Therefore, it could be more effective ideological tool supporting the official crime control system. However, this approach contributes to the polarization effects, increase of public ridicule towards the excluded group and production of stereotypes and folk devils. (*Ibid.*; 43-58)

Inclusion, then, is an attempt to locate and absorb deviants in the conventional spaces, which can by no means offer that much "visible solution". Nevertheless in reality it could be more effective first of all because it does not reinforce deviancy by stigmatization and labeling. The inclusion, which seems to be unrealistic in the state control systems, could be possible by the integration of more active participants into the treatment process, extending on wider community and making the treatment more voluntary.

Although informal social control system could be contra-productive in reducing arrest statistics, it fulfills other more important social functions (discussed by Durkheim). When the major causes of crime are unreachable for control, we should turn to other goals of informal social control, which could justify the system: sustainability, accuracy of implementation, innovation, fulfillment of social needs, establishment of social services, reduction in aggressiveness and violence, increased organization and cooperation, decreased segregation and stigmatization.

### ***Conclusion: Narrowing the Gap between Theory and Practice***

A variety of sociological explanations in criminology addressed above introduces a broad

context for crime prevention. The issues examined in the discourse of sociological criminology outline the main dimensions of social intervention thereby constituting foundations for the new science of crime prevention. The necessity to employ the *broadest stock* of available knowledge is now being underlined by criminologists searching for the correlation between theory and practice of crime prevention. (T. Hope and S. Karstedt 2003) Most importantly, sociological explanations of criminal behavior could provide information when searching for an answer to the questions of what could work in social crime prevention and why it could work. However, the utilization of this knowledge raises further questions about applicability of such complex theoretical models to the practicalities related to the design and strategy of social crime prevention.

The discussion of crime requires the consideration of the setting in which it occurs, the commodities that affect its rate and the efforts required for its reduction (Wilson 1983; 282) Moreover, the analysis of crime and criminality always involves the unstable economic situation as well as social problems of family, changes in educational system and overall social changes, which create vacuum of values in society. The recent expansion of sociological thought in criminology supports the conclusion, that neither situational nor social dimensions of crime prevention could be dismissed from the practice of crime prevention.

The practice of crime prevention translates the main theoretical premises into reality and proposes the laboratory for testing their applicability and validity. Therefore, the dialogue between theory and practice here becomes pre-eminent. For example, the study of religious and school day centers supports the assumption, that these institutions serve their purpose to solve

the problem of children's unemployment thereby organizing their free time and helping them to avoid the street life. (*Ibid.*; 69–89) Moreover, they have a reasonable input in children's school attendance. The relationship between the dropouts from school and the increase of juvenile delinquency has been examined by many sociologists. For instance, Jasine Junger-Tas introduced a Dutch experiment in three vocational schools distinguishing positive correlation between teenager's school problems, school dropouts and delinquency. (Junger-Tas 1991; 551)

Moreover, criminal statistics in Lithuania also proves this link. During the period from 1993 to 1995 number of children who stopped attending school fluctuated between three to four thousand at the same time the bigger part of children, who committed crimes last year, consists of those who do not study and do not work (51.5%)<sup>6</sup>.

School achievements are also related to juvenile delinquency. For example, according to Lithuanian research, 2.7% of children who stopped attending school as the cause of it indicated their bad achievements in learning process. Furthermore, psychologists relate bad achievements at school to the increase of aggressiveness in child's behavior. The aggression within the school may be also explained by the relationships between teachers and pupils. Mandatory school attendance, planned and unified teaching system during the soviet time, formed the gap in teacher-pupils relationship, which was inherited in the national Lithuanian school.

This fact also validates the labeling theory of deviance, according to which, those children who fail at school are labeled as bad and excluded from the group of normal children by various kinds of punishments, such as special classes and denigrating treatment, which changes their so-

<sup>6</sup> Source: Department of Statistics.

cial status. This stigmatization and classification only widens the gap between teacher and failures pushing them away from the whole society. School then becomes the official institution, which rather suppresses than supports those who need to find their place in social grouping. Therefore, excluded children form groups, which are often called deviant subcultures and characterized as the most vulnerable for the criminal behavior.<sup>7</sup>

Many attempts have been made to examine the causes of children's dropouts from school.<sup>8</sup> (Motuzas 1996; 6) One of the recent studies has been taken in Lithuania and yielded very interesting results, according to which school dropouts appear to be the complex problem to be solved by both the family and academic staff. Moreover, it is a problem of the whole society and its changing values in social and economic transitions. Therefore, the strategy of prevention represented in school center and alternative learning programs provides the possibility to reduce this problem by nontraditional ways of teaching and building up new relationships between teachers and pupils.

Following the advice of developmental criminology, family rehabilitation programs are expected to acquire much broader field for the social intervention. First of all, it involves younger children and children may stay longer in program spending day and night in the safe environment gaining the necessary attention. Therefore, the change of environment here is much more radical and stable. Second, family treatment programs have a variety of activities for parents of both real and foster family. Therefore, the individual problem of parent and

child is solved through the involvement of both individual and family therapy.<sup>9</sup>

The efforts of this type of initiatives are supported by theoretical assumptions revealing the relationship between poor parenting and the increase of child's vulnerability for crime, which is presented by the causal scheme of the development of delinquent behavior. Poor parenting here addressed in terms of discipline, monitoring, conflict solving, socio-demographic characteristics constitute a complex of causal variables of juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, T. Hirshi, directing criminological agenda to families' studies, pointed out the supreme importance of family. (Hirshi, 1983; 69–89) Therefore, it is one of the most important dimensions in the social prevention of youth crime. However, this type of preventive strategy introduces the issue of ethics in practice, when applying limitations for the community's intrusion into family affairs.

Looking from the opposite direction, practice of social prevention yields an important practical insights and valuable background information for the *sociologically informed criminology*. Mainly this information could be gathered through the combined process and outcome evaluation, often absent in the official policy evaluation reports. Moreover, studies of crime control politics in Europe reveal the danger of the knowledge provided by *sociologically informed criminology* to be disregarded by the policy makers. The governments tend to ignore the social aspects of crime prevention and refer to situational tools as easily predictable, manageable and measurable tool of crime control. Consequently, the lack of *proper evaluation* results in gaps of criminological knowledge, mystification of social crime prevention practices,

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Jackson Toby and Maria Toby (1961) and Jackson Toby, (1974).

<sup>8</sup> Referring to results of the recent research, 41.8% of children who stopped attending school did not want to study, 14.8% were prevented from school by their parents, 10.8% did not study because of material difficulties faced by their families, 5.7% of school drop-outs live in anti-social families, and 21% of them are street children.

<sup>9</sup> This method have been confirmed by the works of psychotherapy, such as the study of "Family Therapy" by H.E. Richter (1967).

and diminished trust in it on both governmental as well public levels. To re-instate this trust the exchange of knowledge among crime prevention theoreticians, practitioners and policy

makers is required. It should bring back “the social” into the policy decision making, no matter how complex and “inconvenient” it may appear to policy makers.

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