



## Prevention of juvenile delinquency: social and legal aspects

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### Abstract

The article aims at conducting a comprehensive analysis of causes and conditions that increase the number of offenses committed by minors in the Russian Federation. Based on the conclusions drawn, the authors promote a legislative initiative to establish a system of bodies having integrated competence and amend the current legislation to prevent juvenile delinquency.

The study is based on a combination of scientific methods, including theoretical, general philosophical, traditional legal and other methods used in specific sociological studies. The authors highlight the system-structural method. In addition, they use a set of general philosophical methods and the method of generalization to achieve study results.

As a result, the authors have concluded that minor and underage citizens are among the most vulnerable categories of Russian society because they are emotionally unstable and often aggressive. Statistical data demonstrate that minors dream of easy and quick enrichment through the commission of criminal acts since they are hardly to be held liable due to their age. It has been established that the increase in juvenile delinquency is conditioned by various political events in Russia. Thus, minors are often involved in terrorist acts, mass riots and other criminal acts.

The study results will be useful for the Russian law enforcement agencies preventing juvenile delinquency and other institutions, including educational, holding lectures on such disciplines as "Criminal law" and "Administrative law" and conducting preventive educational activities with minors. The authors are the first scholars to focus on the main shortcomings in the prevention of juvenile delinquency and the interaction of bodies that should determine juvenile delinquency. They propose amendments to a unified regulatory system with due regard to the complex nature of implementing measures to prevent juvenile delinquency.

**Keywords:** constitution, minors, economic sphere, underage, delinquencies, criminal offenses, prevention, liability, legislative establishment, competence

Lavrentieva MS, Tchinaryan EO, Kuchenin ES, Turkin MM (2020) Prevention of juvenile delinquency: social and legal aspects. *Eurasia J Biosci* 14: 5515-5521.

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### INTRODUCTION

The current events in Russia have led to significant changes in society. The younger generation took them especially hard and became more "criminally active". A large number of minors is held liable for different offenses. Many underage citizens are members of extremist groups. Their craving for self-affirmation often brings them into the world of crime (Lopushanskii 2007).

More than 50% of the crimes committed by minors are grave. Most of them include robbery, theft and armed robbery committed for profit. There is also a large number of crimes committed by adolescents in the state of intoxication (alcoholic, drug, toxicological).

There are different reasons behind the increase in crimes committed by minors (Glazkova et al. 2015). These reasons will be considered further in the study.

A. N. Pavlukhin, Z. S. Zaripov and N. D. Eriashvili (Pavlukhin, Zaripov, Eriashvili 2017) studied issues related to the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

Motivation-related issues of the unlawful behavior among minors were considered by L. P. Tuzov (Tuzov 2002) and Y. A. Korneeva, N. N. Simonova and N. Yu. Skripchenko (Korneeva, Simonova, Skripchenko 2016).

### METHODS

When conducting the study, we used theoretical, general philosophical (dialectics, the systemic method, analysis, synthesis, analogy, deduction, observation, modeling) and traditional legal methods (formal-logical), as well as the methods used in special sociological

Received: January 2020

Accepted: April 2020

Printed: November 2020

studies (statistical, expert estimates, etc.). The systemic-structural method was selected as the main one, which helped to reveal the most pressing issues related to identifying causes and conditions for the growth of juvenile delinquency in the economic sphere and find possible ways to solve this problem.

Using the above-mentioned methods and applying generalization, we determined the general properties, features and deficiencies associated with the implementation of regulatory legal acts in the field of preventing and detecting criminal offenses committed by adolescents, including the Federal Law "On the Basic System of Preventing Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency". At the legislative level, we also developed a set of measures aimed at protecting the rights and legitimate interests of adolescents.

## RESULTS

In the course of the study, we revealed that the problems associated with juvenile delinquency and economic crimes committed by minors should be regarded from a holistic perspective. In particular, they should be addressed by preventive measures (a combination of educational methods and legal influence on potential violators) and by bringing to justice perpetrators.

The research states that the Russian Federation currently experiences the following problems: orphanhood, vagrancy, child and juvenile crime, especially in the economic sphere. The number of underage citizens living as tramps is growing. According to the existing estimates, there are about 2 million vagrants under the age of 18 in modern Russia.

We consider it appropriate to make certain amendments that will at least partially resolve the problems raised in this article, namely:

1. To establish a system of bodies having integrated competence to identify the rudiments of unlawful behavior among minors, as well as to conduct activities to prevent and suppress the commission of unlawful acts by minors;

2. Competent public authorities shall develop a protocol for liaison between services, units and officials included in the system of bodies having integrated competence.

We proved the necessity of amending Article 8 "Coordination in the fight against crime" of the Federal Law "On the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation" (6) of January 17, 1992 No. 2202-1 and proposed the following version of this article.

Thus, the title of Article 8 of Federal Law of January 17, 1992 No. 2202-1 (Federalnyi zakon ot 17. 01. 1992) "On the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation" should be replaced with a new one:

"Coordination of preventing and combating crime".

In the context of Part 1, Article 8 of the above-mentioned law, the words "coordinate activities" should be supplemented with the words "aimed at preventing criminal offenses". The phrase "other law enforcement agencies" should be extended with the sentence "including activities of the system of bodies having integrated competence in the field of preventing and suppressing crimes committed by minors".

1. To combat crime, the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation and subordinate prosecutors coordinate their activities with internal affairs bodies, federal security service bodies, customs authorities and other law enforcement agencies, as well as a system of bodies having integrated competence involved in the prevention and suppression of juvenile delinquency.

2. To coordinate activities of the bodies mentioned in paragraph 1 of this article, the prosecutor holds coordination meetings, organizes working groups, obtains statistical and other necessary information, as well as exercises other powers in accordance with the Regulation on coordinating crime prevention approved by the President of the Russian Federation.

## DISCUSSION

Many scholars addressed the issue of preventing economic crimes committed by minors. Scholars considered both general techniques and methods for preventing crime in Russia (Pisarevskaya 2019, Valuisikov, Bondarenk, Arutiunian 2017), as well as proposed special methods (Syurkova, Korneeva 2019, Pisarevskaya 2018). Other scholars also studied international experience, which allowed them to make certain proposals for improving the Russian legislation (Dorodonova, Evstifeeva, Ilgova 2018, Barrett DE, Katsiyannis 2016). On the one hand, this issue is relevant for protecting the rights and legitimate interests of adolescents. On the other hand, it is necessary to use additional measures, i. e. amend the current legislation, by-laws and regulations due to the growth of criminal acts committed by persons under the age of 18. Indeed, these measures will lead to a decrease in juvenile delinquency (Shilovskaya et al. 2018, Skuratov, Lavrentieva, Kuchenin 2019).

For a start, we should note that Part 2, Article 35 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Konstitutsiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (prinyata vsenarodnym golosovaniem 12. 12. 1993) states as follows:

1. The right of private property shall be protected by law.
2. Everyone shall have the right to have property, possess, use and dispose of it both personally and jointly with other people.
3. No one may be deprived of property otherwise than by a court decision. Forced confiscation of property for state needs may be carried out only on the proviso of preliminary and complete compensation.

#### 4. The right of inheritance shall be guaranteed.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation (Konstitutsiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (prinyata vsenarodnym golosovaniem 12. 12. 1993) also enshrines the following rights:

– The right to free use of one’s abilities and property for entrepreneurial and economic activities not prohibited by law (Part 1, Article 34 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Konstitutsiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (prinyata vsenarodnym golosovaniem 12. 12. 1993));

– The right to freely use one’s labor capabilities and choose the type of activity and profession (Part 1, Article 37 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Konstitutsiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (prinyata vsenarodnym golosovaniem 12. 12. 1993));

– Prohibition of forced labor (Part 2, Article 37 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Konstitutsiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (prinyata vsenarodnym golosovaniem 12. 12. 1993));

– The right to labor conditions meeting the safety and hygienic requirements (Part 3, Article 37 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (15)).

One of the most common types of law violations is offenses and crimes in the economic sphere, i. e. offenses encroaching on private and state property (16).

Property acts as the core of the state economic system and a means of satisfying spiritual and material aspirations of citizens. The material component provides its owners with stability and opportunity to satisfy consumer needs (Vazhenin 2008). Based on the above-mentioned articles of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Konstitutsiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (prinyata vsenarodnym golosovaniem 12. 12. 1993), new provisions have been added to the Administrative Code of the Russian Federation (Kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ob administrativnykh pravonarusheniyakh ot 30. 12. 2001).

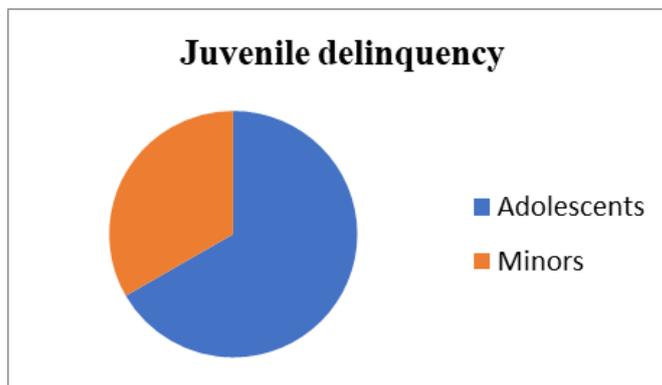
The most common offenses committed in the economic sphere are as follows:

1. Minor larceny (Article 7. 27 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation (18));
2. Engaging in business activities without state registration or special permit (license) (Article 14. 1 of the Administrative Code of the Russian Federation (Kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ob administrativnykh pravonarusheniyakh ot 30. 12. 2001));
3. Deception of consumers (Article 14. 7 of the Administrative Code of the Russian Federation).

If we refer to the most common types of economic crimes, we need to say that they negatively affect production, slow down the movement of investment assets, cause the increase in inflation and corruption, influence financial revenues to state budgets and illegal enrichment of unscrupulous officials. These provisions

are contained in Chapter 21 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019) “Crimes against property”:

1. Theft (Article 158 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
2. Petty theft committed by a person subjected to administrative punishment (Article 158. 1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
3. Swindling (Article 159 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
4. Lending fraud (Article 159. 1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
5. Fraud upon receipt of payments (Article 159. 2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
6. Fraud using electronic means of payment (Article 159. 3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
7. Insurance fraud (Article 159. 5 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
8. Fraud in the field of computer information (Article 159. 6 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
9. Misappropriation or embezzlement (Article 160 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
10. Robbery (Article 161 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996 N 63-FZ (red. ot 27. 12. 2019));
11. Armed robbery (Article 162 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996));
12. Extortion (Article 163 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996));
13. Stealing of objects of exceptional value (Article 164 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996));



**Fig. 1.** The ratio of crimes committed by underage citizens

**Table 1.** The degree of criminal acts committed by underage citizens

Degree of criminal acts	Ratio (%)
Non-grave	about 5%
Medium-gravity	about 15%
Grave	about 78%
Especially grave	about 3-5%

14. Infliction of property damage through deception or abuse of confidence (Article 165 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996));
15. Unlawful occupancy of a car or any other transport vehicle without the purpose of stealing (Article 166 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996));
16. Wilful destruction or damage of property (Article 167 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996));
17. Destruction or damage of property by negligence (Article 168 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Ugolovnyi kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13. 06. 1996)).

Different types of theft (both on a small and large scale), corruption and bribery are widespread in all spheres of life. Most economic crimes are committed in those industries that aim at meeting the basic needs of citizens.

The current statistics show the growth of juvenile delinquency and the above-mentioned facts contribute to it. Comparing the data of 1990 and 2018, the number of criminal acts committed by minors increased by almost 30%.

Adolescents commit over 300, 000 crimes every year. About 100, 000 of these perpetrators are minors. More than a million administrative offenses are committed by citizens under the age of 18 annually.

About 85% of juvenile delinquency and criminal offenses belong to economic crimes. They include thefts, fraudulent acts, robberies, armed robberies, hijackings, intentional destruction or damage to other people’s property. The above-mentioned criminal acts are committed by a group of persons by prior conspiracy

(Razumov 2017). Most underage perpetrators come from dysfunctional families with a single parent and are social orphans and vagrants (Erezhipaliev 2017).

About 35% of crimes are committed by adolescents together with adults. As a rule, these are such grave crimes as banditry, murders or armed robberies.

The degree of criminal acts committed by underage citizens can be classified as follows (**Table 1**).

Nowadays, the fact that minors commit unlawful acts as part of organized criminal groups no longer causes much public response. Many legal scientists claim that the tortious conduct of minors is often of a group nature. More than 60% of all juvenile delinquency is made by group crimes. Moreover, group juvenile delinquency is acquiring typical features of organized crime (Kufaev 2014, Bezhentsev 2019), especially among male adolescents (Vere van Koppen 2018).

Regarding the current criminal trends among minors, we can predict a further increase in the number of robberies and armed robberies committed by organized groups of adolescents.

The growing rates of juvenile delinquency are likely caused by the global concept of “social outsider” when young people and children fall outside the existing society or are pushed out of it. It means that the current state of socialization is defective, spontaneous and uncontrollable. Russian society loses its means of social control over the younger generation. Thus, many traditional institutes of socialization, such as family, school, children’s and youth organizations, have faded in importance and have not been replaced with any relevant associations, except for “street and gateway teachings” (Tuzov 2002, Kuchenin, Tchinaryan, Lutovinova 2019).

Based on the foregoing, we support the opinions of these authors and believe that social practice necessitates a more systemic legal codification

(Glazkova et al. 2015), the complete exclusion of illegal propaganda from television and the Internet (Alekseev 2017 Starodumova et al. 2018. Kornakova, Koryagina. 2016).

The prevention of juvenile delinquency is based on the fundamental principles typical of crime prevention in general.

The work is carried out in the following directions:

1. To limit the influence of negative social factors related to causes and conditions of juvenile delinquency;
2. To limit the impact of factors that can make minors commit criminal offenses (Ivantsov, Ivasyuk, Kalashnikov 2014).

Therefore, we recommend establishing a system of bodies having integrated competence. This system should work in both directions. In other words, it will prevent juvenile delinquency and fight against unlawful acts committed by minors. We believe this system should embrace the following services, units and officials: internal affairs bodies – local police officers, departments of juvenile services, criminal investigation departments, bodies of inquiry and investigation; children’s rights ombudsman; committees for the affairs of minors and protection of their rights, applied research centers of narcology and psychiatry; social protection departments, on-call mental health services, territorial psychological and pedagogical centers, supportive housing facilities for families and children, municipal treatment centers for minors; school teachers, college

and university lecturers, educational psychologists and social educators.

In our opinion, the supervision and coordination of this system and its activities should be assigned to the Prosecutor’s Office of the Russian Federation (Kostenko 2018).

## CONCLUSION

La forms a mechanism for civilized conflict resolution between participants in public relations. However, it does not consider the specific nature of underage citizens.

It is necessary to tighten control over minors both through their parents or legal representatives and through different bodies, institutions and officials, which we propose to unify into a system of bodies having integrated competence. The latter should be provided with broader powers and refer to amended Federal Law “On the Prosecutor’s Office of the Russian Federation” of January 17, 1992 No. 2202-1.

The issues stated above require a further comprehensive study of the phenomenon in question. In this regard, legislators should develop an additional set of measures for the adoption of new regulatory legal acts and the introduction of amendments to the current legislation.

Although these issues were not addressed in the framework of this study, they might become the basis for further research.

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