

JUVENILE PRISON – CONVINCED: PERPETRATOR AND VICTIM OF A CRIMINAL OFFENSE

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The purpose of imposing criminal sanctions has been established by the most important regulations from the field of criminal law. In particular, the purpose of imposing or executing a prison sentence is defined as the most severe criminal sanction that can be imposed on the perpetrator of a certain criminal act. After starting to serve the sentence, the process of reintegration of persons sentenced to effective prison sentences begins. It is an extremely important issue, which, although there is an awareness of its importance, has not in practice been given enough attention for various reasons: a lack of qualified professional staff in institutions for the execution of prison sentences, the overcrowding of these institutions or limited material resources at the state level.

However, there are also less researched aspects of this problem, such as the different types of deprivation that convicts are exposed to while serving their sentences. This is a particularly sensitive issue in the case of a juvenile prison sentence, which is served in the Penitentiary for Juveniles in Valjevo. Juvenile convicts, in addition to committing the crimes for which they were convicted, are often exposed to the risk of becoming victims of various crimes themselves, including violence, abuse and other forms of victimization by other convicts or even individual staff members. The aim of this paper is to point out the above-mentioned phenomenon, which is further complicated by a lack of mechanism for the protection of victims in the prison system, as well as the fear of reporting abuse due to possible consequences. The paper states specific views that are the result of research carried out in this institution, and which may be of importance for other institutions where prison sentences are carried out in Serbia.

KEYWORDS: convict, Penitentiary for Juveniles in Valjevo, victimization.

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Introduction

The most severe criminal sanction that can be imposed on a perpetrator of a specific crime, a convicted adult, is imprisonment, while a specific criminal sanction is imposed on minors - the most severe, but also the only punishment - juvenile prison. The purpose of imprisonment or juvenile prison sentences is defined precisely by the relevant laws - the Criminal Code (hereinafter: CC),¹ i.e. the Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Legal Protection of Minors (hereinafter: Juvenile Law).²

After the sentencing of the persons (adults and minors) against whom these, the most severe criminal sanctions have been imposed, the convicted persons begin to serve their prison sentences, i.e. juvenile prison sentences. From that moment, the process of rehabilitation of these persons and their preparation for reintegration into normal society after serving their sentence begins. The process of reintegration in the Serbian prison system generally begins after the admission of convicts to serve their sentence, their observation and classification, through the treatment of convicts, which is carried out through various forms of treatment during which the effects of the treatment are assessed (Stevanović, 2014). The issue of treatment is regulated by a corresponding by-law.³ The process of the reintegration of convicts, regardless of whether effective prison sentences are involved, such as juvenile prison, is an extremely important issue, which, although there is awareness of its importance, is given insufficient attention in practice for various reasons. This could be a lack of appropriate professional staff in institutions for the execution of prison sentences, overcrowding of these institutions or limited material resources at the state level. The complex situation is further complicated by the fact that the “criminal infection” in prison is increasingly pronounced, and the formal system is increasingly weak and ineffective, which calls into question the realization of the basic functions of prisons (Stevanović, Igrački, 2011, pp. 411-415).

Research shows that the process of rehabilitation that takes place in prisons has no significant effect on changes in criminal behavior pattern and thus the convicts very quickly return to their former criminal behavior patterns. Penologists explain such a situation with failed rehabilitation, the dominant influence of the prison’s negative informal structure, but also the impotence of the prison as an institution to change the criminal behavior patterns of criminals (Igrački, 2020, pp. 127-128). Experts from practice state that in the system of execution of criminal sanctions from

¹ *Criminal Code*, Off. Gazette of the RS, nos. 85/2005, 88/2005, 107/2005, 72/2009, 111/2009, 121/2012, 104/2013, 108/2014, 94/2016, 35/2019, 94/2024.

² *Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Legal Protection of Minors*, Off. Gazette of the RS, nos. 85/2005.

³ *Regulations on the treatment, treatment program, classification and subsequent classification of convicted persons*, Off. Gazette of the RS, no. 66/2015.

the aspect of security risks, both in Serbia and in the world, there are several types of risks. Among others, there are risks from the domain of social security, where it is particularly stated: the pronounced strong influence of the informal prison system in large penal correctional institutions and the unfavorable criminological structure of convicts in relation to the types of institutions (Đujić et al., 2024, p. 261).

In the previous period, research was carried out in this direction within the 2023 Prison Life project, starting from the fact that the quality of prison life is one of the fundamental factors of the prison transformation of convicted persons and their successful reintegration, and that as such it is unique in each prison system and each individual institution. This project included some of the largest institutions for the executing of criminal sanctions in Serbia, as it emerges from the expert report: the research was carried out in the prison for women in Požarevac, the closed prison in Sremska Mitrovica and Niš, as well as in the following maximum-security prisons: the prison in Požarevac - Zabela and the prison in Belgrade, due to the complexity of the structure of these institutions and the population of convicted persons who serve prison sentences in them (Ćopić et al., 2023, pp. 16-18).⁴

Unfortunately, this project did not include the only institution of its kind intended for the execution of juvenile prison sentences in Serbia for male convicts of the age of older minors. It is the Penitentiary for Juveniles in Valjevo (hereinafter: Valjevo Penitentiary) which is a closed institution according to the Decree on the Establishment of Institutions for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions in the Republic of Serbia.⁵ In this institution, all juvenile perpetrators of criminal offenses for which this sentence was imposed on the territory of the Republic of Serbia by the competent higher courts,⁶ as well as some younger adults,⁷ are serving the sentence of juvenile prison. In addition to them, individual adults also serve their prison sentences in this institution in accordance with the Rulebook on sending convicted, misdemeanor charged and detained persons to institution for the executing criminal sanctions.⁸

When it comes to the reintegration of convicted persons, there are also less researched aspects of this problem, such as the different types of deprivations that convicts - regardless of age - are exposed to while serving their sentences. This is a

⁴ Expert report: Quality of prison life in the Republic of Serbia, Dr. Sanja Ćopić et al., Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research Belgrade, 2023, 16, 18.

⁵ *Regulation on the Establishment of Institutions for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions in the Republic of Serbia*, Off. Gazette of the RS, nos.20/2006-3, 89/2009-8, 32/2010-8, 53/2011-7, 11/2017-9, 13/2022-5), Article 6.

⁶ Article 29-31, 137, Juvenile Law.

⁷ Article 40, 137, Juvenile Law

⁸ *Rulebook on Treatment, Program of Action, Classification and Subsequent Classification of Convicted Persons*, Off. Gazette of the RS 31/2015, Article 28.

particularly sensitive issue in the case of a juvenile prison sentences, in the Valjevo Penitentiary. Juvenile convicts, above all other convicts in this institution, after entering the juvenile prison sentence for the crimes for which they were convicted, are often at risk of becoming victims of various crimes themselves, including violence, abuse and other forms of victimization by other convicts or even individual staff members. This problem is further complicated by the lack of victim protection mechanisms within the prison system, as well as the fear of reporting abuse due to possible repercussions.

The goal of this paper, which is of a limited scope is, through the research conducted relating to a specific legal and social phenomenon in which convicts in the Valjevo Penitentiary - minors, younger adults, but also adult convicts serving their sentence in this institution, to draw attention to the situations whereupon they can find themselves in conditions where they are not only perpetrators of criminal acts, but can also become victims of certain illegal acts during the time they are serving their sentences, in juvenile prison, i.e. prison sentence.

Execution of sentence of juvenile prison – prison

After the verdict becomes final, older minors or younger adults, sentenced to a juvenile prison sentence, if they are in custody, are brought to serve their sentences, and those who are at liberty are directed by the competent court to report to the Valjevo Penitentiary on a certain day with the aim of rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The execution of a juvenile prison sentence is regulated by the provisions of the Juvenile Law and is based on an individual program of treatment for juveniles that is adapted to his or her personality and in accordance with modern achievements in science, pedagogical and penal practice.⁹ A more detailed treatment of the above categories of convicts is regulated by the Rulebook on House Rules of Penitentiaries for Juveniles.¹⁰ Given that certain categories of adults are also serving prison sentences in the Valjevo Penitentiary, in relation to them, the execution of prison sentences is regulated by the provisions of the Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions¹¹ and corresponding by-laws.

Juveniles, due to their young age and maturity, usually have underdeveloped abilities to understand the consequences of their actions, and after serving their sentences, they are often exposed to various forms of violence by other convicts, especially older ones. Namely, they can become victims of various forms of violence:

⁹ *Law on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions*, Off. Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 55/2014, 35/2019.

¹⁰ *Regulations on the House Rules for Juvenile Correctional Facilities*, Off. Gazette of the RS, no. 71/2006.

¹¹ Article 93, 137-145, Juvenile Law.

physical abuse, mental manipulation or abuse, and sexual violence, which can further complicate their social and psychological development. Also, they can become victims of exploitation by other convicts.

Justice systems often attempt to balance responsibility and rehabilitation when it comes to juveniles, but in many cases, there is a need for additional work on prevention, as well as socialization and psychological support.

In the Valjevo Penitentiary, which is a closed institution, the dynamics of inter-group and interpersonal relationships of the convicts takes on a more pronounced character, to the extent that the perpetrators can become victims of violence within the institution. Informal relationships of convicts in Valjevo Penitentiary often encourage victimization, especially with those convicts whose status in the informal system is not well positioned. Because in almost all closed-type institutions, including Valjevo Penitentiary, not only is there a formal, legally prescribed system, there is also an informal prison system, which is very difficult to control (Arsenijević, 2007, p. 62).

The convicted: perpetrator and victim of a criminal offense

Victimology, as a scientific discipline, deals with the study of victims, and interpretations of this term vary depending on the type of persons sentenced to juvenile prison.

Von Hentig was among the first to warn about the need to protect victims of crimes (Von Hentig, 1948, p. 187). He gave the first systematic description of the different roles of victims in creating crime, claiming that there is a sense in which “the victim shapes and is shaped,” and that the interaction between the perpetrator and the victim is a kind of collusion, although without understanding or any conscious participation (Von Hentig, 1948, p. 384). Blesch states that von Hentig tried to understand the role of the victim by distinguishing between the victims of family abuse (e.g. child abuse, murder of parents), spatial-temporal victims (e.g. weekends are more prone to committing crime than working days) and age reasons (Blesch, 2020, p. 4).

The Declaration of Basic Principles for Victims of Crimes and Abuse of Power defines that a victim is a person who has undergone physical or psychological injuries, emotional suffering, material damage or a violation of their fundamental rights, whether these actions be violations of domestic criminal laws or international human rights norms.¹²

In a narrower context, a convict may become a victim due to a specific criminal offense being committed against him within the prison system. In addition, convicts

¹² *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power GA Res. 40/34, Annex 1985*. It is not subject to ratification as it is not an international treaty.

can become victims when their rights or interests are directly destroyed or threatened by the criminal behavior of another convict, as well as by the employees of the institution. In a broader sense, a convict can also become a victim due to a violation of his or her legal rights, the violation of their integrity and security. These rights and interests can refer to a wider group of prisoners or even the entire prison system itself, which is viewed as a sociological unit. The victimization of convicts can occur as a result of the omission of both a natural and a legal person who did not act in accordance with the norms or international standards of human rights.

Victimology, especially in the context of the convict population, requires an interdisciplinary approach that includes sociology, psychology, pedagogy and other fields, which in turn enables a deeper understanding and adequate provision of a solution to the issue of victimization. In the context of this paper regarding the Valjevo Penitentiary, inmates are very often both victims and perpetrators of criminal acts in the same time. Although some are not formally victims of criminal acts, they are often victimized due to the delinquent behavior of other individuals or groups with whom they are forced to interact within a closed space. The process of victimization in prison is complex and requires a multidisciplinary approach, which would enable a better understanding of the position of convicts who themselves had inflicted evil, and at the same time became victims.

The tasks of victimology in the Valjevo penitentiary

The need to research victimization within a prison population opens up a wide range of issues associated with victims of criminal behavior and other crimes. The main goal of this research is to create a scientifically based knowledge about the causes of criminal behavior that leads to generating new victims among the convicts. Such a knowledge base plays a key role in the implementation of effective preventive policies, enabling an easier detection of perpetrators and reducing the risk of unnecessary and harmful activities that may occur in the organizational environment, which in turn would ensure the priority of protecting the rights and interests of the victims.

The tasks of victimology within the context of an institutional isolation of convicts in juvenile institutions are focused on several key areas. These includes the following:

- measuring the actual dimensions of victimization among the convicts;
- defining and examining methods of treating victims that arise as a result of prison dynamics;

- research on how society should react to criminal behavior that occurs as a result of the forming and developing of informal convict groups within the system of punishment; and
- identifying, defining and describing in detail the problems faced by victims that are a consequence of the existence of informal prison system.

Primary and secondary victimization of convicts

A convict who becomes a victim of a criminal offense or any other offense suffers both material and moral damage, which can be a combination of both forms. Convict-victims often experience physical as well as psychological traumas, which are directly correlated with the severity and the manner of injury. In addition to the physical violence, psychological problems can also occur due to interaction with other convicts who commit non-violent crimes, but also through the social dynamics within the prison. These consequences represent **primary victimization**, which creates a wide range of problems and challenges in the functionality and adaptation in such a specific social environment of the prison.

In addition to primary victimization, convicts may also be exposed to **secondary victimization**, which is the result of the radicalization of primary victimization. This process most often occurs through the negative reactions resulting from the prison environment, and especially due to the lack of adequate responses from the institutions responsible for the safety and rights of the convicts. In many cases, the victimization of convicts is not sufficiently recognized nor adequately analyzed, starting from the immediate environment and the wider social aspect of the problem.

Practical examples show that many convict-victims are unwilling to report the violence they had undergone by other convicts. A fear of repeated violence, stigmatization and traumatic experiences during the reconstruction of the event often prevent them from seeking help. The inadequate reaction of the administration of the institution only worsens the already difficult situation of those convicts, especially young people who, due to their psychophysical development, are particularly vulnerable to secondary victimization.

When proceedings are carried out in the institution after a crime committed by one or more convicts against another, a balance is often set between the rights of the victim and the rights of the perpetrator. Although the perpetrator's rights are formally recognized, the victim is not given enough attention to minimize the consequences. The secondary victimization of convicts can be direct or indirect.

Direct secondary victimization includes situations where:

- the institution administration treats the victim inadequately;
- the victim receives insufficient protection from threats, intimidation and revenge by violent convicts; and
- there is a lack of victim protection from stigmatization and negative publicity.

Indirect secondary victimization refers to the following:

- a lack of communication, exchange and flow of information between the convict-victim and the administration of the institution; and
- problems arising in regards to the compliance with the victim's rights, such as the right to compensation for damages from the perpetrator or the persons responsible.

Victimization in prisons, especially in the context of the juvenile system, requires a comprehensive understanding and a multidisciplinary approach that includes sociology, psychology and other relevant scientific fields, in order to provide adequate protection and support to all victims within this specific environment.

Advancement in treatment allows the use of part of the annual vacation outside the institution, as well as paid and extraordinary leave, going out to the city with or without a visit, and extended visits. However, the treatment progress of convicts causes not only a change in the mentioned benefits, but also a significant difference in the level of their victimization. Namely, all of this is directly related to the deprivations of convicts, especially juvenile convicts. Deprivations of convicted persons are otherwise significant for re-education work in general, for the purpose of recognizing the conditions in which the convict community is structured and possibly reducing the conditions and causes that unnecessarily increase the effects of already existing deprivations (Nikolić, 2005, p. 129).

The subject and objective of the research

The subject of the research in connection with execution of juvenile prison sentence and minors as perpetrators and victims of criminal offenses includes the study of the degree of victimization of convicted persons in the Valjevo Penitentiary who, in addition to the retributive character of the imposed sentence, as perpetrators of criminal offenses, have found themselves in situations whereupon they themselves are victims of violence by some other convicted persons while serving their sentence in juvenile prison.

In a previous work of one of the authors of this paper, research had been presented that related to convicts who are in closed treatment. This research showed that “within the informal prison system in Valjevo Penitentiary, there are three clearly differentiated sub-groups of convicts, between which there is a statistically significant difference based on their status and power” (Krstajić, 2015, p. 311). This division was the basis for further research in determining a very important phenomenon in internal prisoner group interaction, first of all in determining the degree of victimization of those convicts in closed treatment and belong to the informal convict system within the penitentiary for minors, analyzed in another study (Krstajić, Vujsanović, Joksimović, 2016).

In this paper, the research refers to the convicts in Valjevo Penitentiary who are in the **open** and **semi-open department** of the institution.

Law on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions and by-laws primarily, the Rulebook on Treatment, Program of Action, Classification and Subsequent Classification of Convicted Persons, provides for the classification and subsequent classification of persons sentenced to imprisonment, according to the assessment of the degree of risk. By classification, convicted persons are sent to a closed, semi-open or open department, and each of these departments has a different level of implementation of security measures and activities. Convicted persons who are in a closed department, apart from the highest level of security, have different dynamics of mutual relations in which the informal prison system has a more dominant role than the role in a semi-open or open department. This research dealt with the degree of victimization of persons sentenced to juvenile prison who are in the semi-open and open department of the Penal Correctional Institution for juveniles and basically showed that there is a significant level of victimization among them. However, the main intention is to place this research in a mutual relationship with the previous research on the degree of victimization of convicted persons who are in a closed department within the Institute. Only then do we get the full dimension of the connection between the classification of convicted persons by department and the degree of their victimization.

The goal of this kind of research is multiple, and includes different aspects:

- increasing the understanding of the complexity of juvenile delinquency and the factors that lead to committing crimes in Valjevo Penitentiary;
- the evaluation of existing legal practices in relation to minors and an identification of areas in which improvement is needed;

- an improvement of rehabilitation programs, in order to enable a better rehabilitation of minors into society, a reduced rate of recidivism and ensured protection of victims;

- developing preventive strategies, in order to reduce the frequency of juvenile crime and violence in society; and

- increasing the protection of the rights of minors, especially those who are both perpetrators and victims at the same time, and who may be particularly vulnerable within the legal system.

Such research can also contribute to creating new policies and laws that will better address the specific needs of minors within the criminal justice system and society as a whole.

The hypothetical framework of the research

The basic hypothesis are:

“In the Penitentiary for Juveniles, there is a statistically significant degree of victimization among convicts who are serving prison terms sentences in the open and semi-open department.”

“In the Penitentiary for Juveniles, there is a statistically significant higher degree of victimization of convicts who are in a closed department compared to the degree of victimization of convicts who are in an open, semi-open and open department.”

The research sample includes 84 convicts who are serving prison sentences in semi-open department.

The basic research technique used in the process of collecting data related to victimization is survey research, which has provided us with an uniformity in examination, the feeling of anonymity in the respondents, as a very important condition, but also economy.

The dependent variable ‘victimization’ is covered by a survey of the degree of victimization and is composed of a total of 33 questions, with the following answers offered:

1. Never (1 point)
2. 1-2 times (2 points)
3. Several times (3 points)

We obtained the degree of victimization by the total sum of respondent answers to the questions asked. The minimum score for answers to the victimization questions was 33, and the maximum was 99. Higher scores indicate a higher degree of victimization.

Representative questions in the *Victimization* survey:

1. Did any convict shout at you in such a way that you were afraid?
2. Did any convict make fun of you?
3. One of the convicts beat you, did you get beaten?
4. Did any convict steal and use your money from the deposit?
5. Did any convict intentionally destroy your things?
6. Did any convict not allow your sleep and rest?
7. Did any convict deliberately tell lies about you, which put you in danger?
8. Did any convict insult you because of your appearance?
9. Did any convict threaten you with physical violence?
10. Did any convict try to touch you in an intimate way even though you didn't want it?
11. Did any convicts force you to keep illegal items for them (such as a telephone, dagger, barbell, etc.)?

The test data processed using a sample of convicts should show the validity of the victimization test, that is, whether under the same conditions, in case of repetition, this test would show approximately equal results and whether it has a normal distribution.

The victimization test should show whether and to what extent there is victimization among convict who are serving their prison sentences in the semi-open department of the Valjevo Penitentiary.

The score or sum of the entire victimization test, on a sample of convicts, former members of the informal prison system, indicates whether the distribution of the results on the deprivation test is normal (Skewness and Kurtosis values). The analysis of the sum on the victimization test indicates the values of the arithmetic mean, the standard deviation, as well as the values of the minimum and maximum test scores. The above values are an indicator that compares the value of the sum of victimization obtained on the entire sample of the victimization test among former informal prison system members with the sum values of the victimization test as a whole, on the sample of informal prison system members, as well as the comparison with the values of individual victimization scores for all three subgroups of informal prison system members.

The table called "The analysis of the victimization test sum on a sample of former informal prison system members" shows that after statistical data processing, the arithmetic mean was 43.15, the standard deviation was 9.891, the minimum score on the victimization test was 33 and the maximum score was 66 on the total sample of 84 prisoners. The values of the arithmetic mean, the minimum and maximum scores on the victimization test indicate that there is an evident level of victimization on the total sample of tested convicts.

Table 1*Analysis of the victimization test sum*

N		84
	Missing	0
Arithmetic mean		43.15
Median-measure of central tendency		43.00
Std. Deviation		9.891
Skewness		.004
Std. Error of Skewness		.271
Kurtosis		.410
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.535
Minimum		33
Maksimum		66

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the victimization test sum. The specified table shows the minimum score for the total sample (84), which is 33 and the maximum score, which is 66, with an arithmetic mean of 43.15 and a standard deviation of 9.891.

Table 2*Descriptive statistics of victimization test scores*

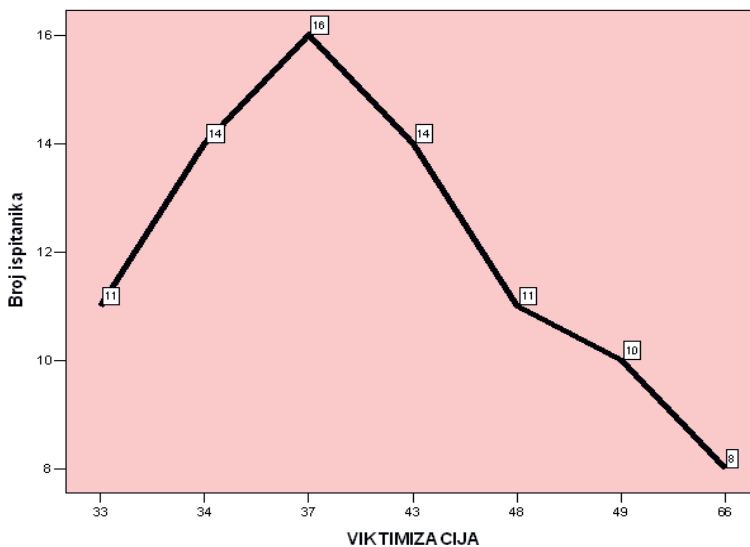
	No. of respondents	Min.	Max.	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Victimization test score	84	33	66	43.15	9.891

It was important for the authors to determine the distribution of prisoners by victimization scores, which can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3*Distribution of convicts according to victimization scores*

	Frequencies	%	Sum %
33	11	13.1	13.1
34	14	16.7	29.8
37	16	19.0	48.8
43	14	16.7	65.5
48	11	13.1	78.6
49	10	11.9	90.5
66	8	9.5	100.0
Total	84	100.0	

This is shown in the following diagram, which clearly shows the scores of the victimization test. Out of 84 respondents, only 11 have a minimum score of 33. The rest of the respondents have a victimization score up to 66, which is in the middle of the scale between the minimum score of 33 and the maximum possible score of 99.

Diagram 1*Representation of the distribution of respondents by victimization scores*

By way of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Table 4 shows the authors whether there is a normal distribution of the victimization test, based on the sample of examined convicts.

Table 4

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

		Victimization test score
N		84
	Arithmetic mean	43.15
	Std. Deviation	9.891
	Absolute	.189
	Positive	.189
	Negative	-.152
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z score		1.677
Significance		.007

The upper Kolmogorov-Smirnov test shows that the average degree of victimization (arithmetic mean) of convicted persons in open and semi-open departments is 43.15, and that there is a normal distribution, i.e. the significance is greater than 0.05, which in this specific case is 0.07, which means that the null hypothesis H0 is maintained and that distribution is normal.

Taking into account the presented data analysis, the hypothesis that reads “In the Penitentiary for Juveniles there is a statistically significant degree of victimization among convicts who are serving prison sentences in open and semi-open department” is fully confirmed.

For a better understanding of the obtained results, the authors believe that it is necessary to explain this hypothesis.

This hypothesis refers to the total group of convicts who are in open and semi-open type departments, without comparing individual groups among themselves. The goal was to determine whether the overall degree of victimization in that group is statistically significant.

In order to check, the victimization test was applied, which consists of 33 questions, where the results reflect the level of victimization of individuals. Analyzing the results, the average value of the score was calculated, which was 43.15 out of a total of 66 possible points, which indicates a high degree of victimization among all convicts in these two departments.

In order to ensure the reliability of the results, a statistical check of the normality of the distribution of the results was performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The test result was of significance 0.07, which is above the critical limit of 0.05, and indicates that the results are normally distributed. This confirmed that the average value of the results is representative and that one can reliably speak about the overall level of victimization in the group.

Based on these analyses, it can be concluded that a high and statistically significant degree of victimization was recorded in the entire group of convicts in the open and semi-open departments. This finding confirms the initial hypothesis, that victimization is present and significant in the total population of convicts in those departments.

In the paper entitled "Victimization and informal convict system in juvenile prison" (Krstajić, Vuksanović, Joksimović, 2016) it was proven that the average degree of victimization of convicts who belong to the closed department of the juvenile correctional institution is 49.97.

The table below shows the mentioned result.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics of victimization test scores of convicted persons in closed department

	No. of respondents	Min.	Max.	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Victimization test score	102	33,00	83,00	49,9706	9,98658

By comparing the average degree of victimization of convicted persons in a closed department (49,97), which was the task of the mentioned research (Krstajić, Vuksanović, Joksimović, 2016), with the average degree of victimization of convicted persons, who are in open and semi-open departments (43,15), we draw an unequivocal conclusion that there is a higher degree of victimization of convicted persons who are serving prison terms in a closed department.

Based on the above, the second hypothesis in this paper: "In the Penitentiary for Juveniles, there is a statistically significant higher degree of victimization of convicts who are in a closed department compared to the degree of victimization of convicts who are in an open, semi-open and open department", has been fully proven.

In order to better understand the obtained result, the authors believe that it is necessary to explain the second hypothesis.

This hypothesis refers to a comparison of the level of victimization between convicts in different types of department (closed versus semi-open and open department) within a Valjevo Penitentiary. Based on the results of the first hypothesis, where it was determined that convicts in open and semi-open department have a high, but not maximum, degree of victimization, the question arises whether this degree is significantly lower compared to convicts in closed department.

The previous, above-mentioned work from 2016 showed that convicts in a closed department have a high degree of victimization. Accordingly, the current hypothesis assumes that there are statistically significant differences in the level of victimization among the groups of convicts in closed, compared to convicts who are in open and semi-open departments, whereby convicts in closed department are the most victimized, while convicts in open and semi-open departments are less victimized, but that this degree still remains significant.

To confirm this hypothesis, the results of the victimization score for convicts in all types of departments were analyzed. The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the levels of victimization between closed versus semi-open and open departments, where the degree of victimization in closed departments is significantly higher than in open and semi-open ones, although the victimization of convicted persons is also significant in those departments.

By comparing the results obtained based on the hypotheses analyzed and explained above, we can confirm with certainty that convicts in semi-open and open departments have a high degree of victimization, but that it is significantly lower than the degree of victimization of convicts in closed departments.

Conclusion

Violence, which is evident among convicted persons, significantly affects the purpose of the criminal sanction. The famous phrase “it’s not hard prison, it’s hard prisoners” gets its full meaning in this way. The Treatment service, as well as other services in the Valjevo Penitentiary, are involved in the complex process of resocialization and reintegration of convicts.

This research indicates that the success of the course of institutional implementation of treatment in conditions where victimization among the convicts is significantly present, makes institutional action difficult. The dynamics of mutual relations between convicts generates violence through the rules imposed by convicts with

a stronger status, and non-compliance with them produces consequences that are greater than those that would eventually be suffered from violating the rules prescribed by law and by-laws.

There are various categories of convicts serving their juvenile prison sentences or prison sentences in the Valjevo Penitentiary, these being minors, young adults and certain categories of adult convicts, in accordance with the Juvenile Law, i.e. the Law on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions and corresponding by-laws.

All convicted persons while serving their sentence, regardless of whether they were sentenced to a juvenile prison sentence or a prison sentence that is served in the Valjevo Penitentiary, take part in various institutional programs, with the aim of successful reintegration into society.

The stay of convicted persons inside Valjevo Penitentiary is always accompanied by the other, informal side of interpersonal and intergroup relations of convicted persons. The informal system in Valjevo Penitentiary cultivates its own subculture, based on unwritten rules that, if violated, initiate a higher degree of victimization, which is conditioned by the different statuses of convicts in the informal prison system. A part of the convicted persons is in the closed department of the Valjevo Penitentiary, according to the categorization in the treatment procedure. When the level of risk and assessment, primarily by the Treatment Service in the Valjevo Penitentiary, is such that it allows recategorization, certain convicts move to a semi-open department, which has its own comparative advantages when it comes to the benefits that convicts receive. The previous research of the authors of this paper examined the victimization of convicts in closed departments of prisons and it is manifestly high.

The focus of this research was to measure the degree of victimization of convicts in open and semi-open department, with slightly more favorable treatment. In the relevant sample, the degree of victimization of convicted persons was determined, which is significant and evident, and in relation to the degree of victimization of convicts who are in a closed department, it is lower. The above leads to the conclusion that indicates that there are different factors, such as the building conditions, the number of convicts staying together in the same space and the specifics of informal convict relationships, which significantly affect the degree of the victimization of convicts.

Progress in treatment lowers the degree of victimization of convicted persons, primarily due to influence and contact with the status-strongest groups of convicts in the informal system, who are most often in a closed department.

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