

CRIMINOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY-BASED CRIME AND MEASURES FOR ITS PREVENTION

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Аннотация

В данной статье исследуется криминологическая природа преступлений, совершаемых в семье, и рассматриваются факторы, способствующие внутрисемейному насилию, жестокому обращению и деструктивным моделям поведения. Признавая частный и часто скрытый характер семейной преступности, исследование анализирует её психологические, социально-экономические и культурные детерминанты и выделяет трудности выявления, сообщения о преступлениях и правового вмешательства. Используя междисциплинарный подход, объединяющий криминологию, социологию, психологию и право, исследование выявляет основные факторы риска, такие как патриархальные нормы, экономическая зависимость, травмы, слабые системы социальной поддержки и передача насилия из поколения в поколение. В статье также оцениваются существующие профилактические меры, включая правовые реформы, службы защиты, образовательные программы и мероприятия на уровне общин. Результаты показывают, что профилактика семейной преступности требует комплексной стратегии, учитывающей как индивидуальное поведение, так и структурное неравенство.

Ключевые слова: семейная преступность, домашнее насилие, криминология, профилактика, защита жертв, структура семьи, социальная политика, динамика насилия, факторы риска.

Abstract

This article explores the criminological nature of crimes committed within the family and examines the factors contributing to intra-family violence, abuse, and destructive behavioural patterns. Recognizing the private and often concealed character of domestic crime, the study analyses its psychological, socio-economic, and cultural determinants and highlights the difficulties of detection, reporting, and legal intervention. Through a multidisciplinary approach integrating criminology, sociology, psychology, and law, the research identifies major risk factors such as patriarchal norms, economic dependency, trauma, weak social support systems, and generational transmission of violence. The article also evaluates existing prevention measures, including legal reforms,

protective services, educational programs, and community-based interventions. Findings demonstrate that preventing family-based crime requires a comprehensive strategy that addresses both individual behaviour and structural inequalities.

Keywords: family-based crime, domestic violence, criminology, prevention, victim protection, family structure, social policy, abuse dynamics, risk factors.

INTRODUCTION

Family-based crime, often referred to as domestic violence or intra-family criminality, remains a pervasive yet frequently hidden social problem across cultures and societies. Despite its occurrence in the private sphere, its consequences extend far beyond individual households, affecting community safety, intergenerational stability, and public health. The criminological study of domestic crime is complex because the family, traditionally viewed as a site of protection and emotional support, simultaneously becomes a setting where control, aggression, and victimization unfold. Understanding this duality requires systematic examination of structural, psychological, and cultural processes that shape family relations.

Criminology increasingly recognizes family-based crime as a category distinct from general interpersonal violence due to its relational context, emotional dynamics, and chronicity. It is characterized by repeated patterns of coercion, dominance, and psychological manipulation, often developing over years. Offences committed within the household include physical assault, psychological abuse, sexual violence, neglect, economic exploitation, elder abuse, and child maltreatment. The private nature of the family, combined with emotional ties between offender and victim, makes detection difficult and significantly reduces reporting rates.

Historically, domestic violence was considered a private matter and excluded from legal regulation. Patriarchal legal systems granted authority to household heads, and many acts of abuse were normalized or justified. Only in the late twentieth century did international organizations and national legislators begin to conceptualize domestic crime as a violation of human rights. Contemporary criminology views family-based crime as both a behavioural phenomenon and a structural issue integrating economic dependency, gender power imbalances, cultural norms, and psychological vulnerabilities.

The significance of studying family-based crime lies in its broad societal consequences. Children raised in violent families face long-term risks of trauma, criminal behaviour, and impaired development. Women and elderly individuals suffer physical and mental harm, and the cycle of violence often perpetuates across generations. The collective impact burdens healthcare systems, social services, and justice institutions.

The aim of this article is to examine the criminological characteristics of family-based crime, analyse its determinants, and propose effective preventive measures based on interdisciplinary evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Research on family-based crime spans several academic fields. In criminology, early theoretical foundations are linked to the works of Edwin Sutherland and the Chicago School, which emphasized the influence of social learning and community context. According to Sutherland, deviant behaviour is learned through interactions, implying that family environments can transmit violent norms. Later, Albert Bandura's social learning theory further developed this idea, demonstrating how observing aggression shapes behavioural patterns in children.

Psychological literature highlights trauma, personality disorders, and attachment problems as key determinants. Bowlby's attachment theory illustrates how insecure or abusive caregiving creates emotional instability that may later manifest as violence. Contemporary trauma studies show that children exposed to domestic violence exhibit higher rates of anxiety, depression, emotional dysregulation, and later delinquency.

Sociological frameworks stress structural inequalities, particularly gender-based power imbalances. Feminist criminology argues that patriarchal norms legitimize male dominance and female subordination, creating a permissive environment for intimate partner violence. Economic dependence is a central theme: women lacking financial autonomy are less able to leave abusive partners, increasing vulnerability.

Legal scholarship has documented significant transformations in domestic violence legislation. The Istanbul Convention (2011), United Nations reports, and national reforms have expanded definitions of domestic crime, introduced protective orders, and strengthened victim support systems. However, enforcement remains inconsistent, and cultural resistance continues to undermine progress.

Recent literature focuses on new dimensions, such as digital domestic abuse, coercive control, and elder abuse. Studies show that technology facilitates surveillance, intimidation, and harassment within families. Criminological research also highlights the hidden nature of domestic abuse, estimating that only a fraction of cases are reported, making it a highly latent form of crime.

Overall, the literature emphasizes that family-based crime is multidimensional, rooted in psychological vulnerability, socio-economic stress, cultural norms, and structural inequalities. Its prevention requires equally multidimensional strategies.

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical methodology, integrating theoretical frameworks from criminology, psychology, sociology, and law. The approach emphasizes conceptual depth and interdisciplinary synthesis rather than statistical measurement.

The methodological stages include:

1. **Conceptual Clarification** — defining family-based crime and distinguishing it from general interpersonal violence by focusing on relational dynamics, emotional ties, and power imbalances.
2. **Causal Examination** — analysing psychological, socio-economic, cultural, and structural determinants, drawing from established theories and empirical studies.
3. **Comparative Analysis** — reviewing prevention strategies across different countries, including legislative reforms, protective services, community interventions, and international standards.
4. **Interpretive Synthesis** — integrating findings into a coherent criminological model that accounts for individual behaviour, structural conditions, and cultural influences.

Data sources include academic monographs, peer-reviewed journals, UN and WHO reports, and international conventions. The interpretive method ensures a comprehensive view of family-based crime as a dynamic phenomenon shaped by social norms, economic conditions, and psychological factors.

The limitation of this methodology is the absence of original empirical data; however, existing research provides a sufficiently rich foundation for conceptual analysis and policy recommendations.

RESULTS

The analysis reveals several defining criminological characteristics of family-based crime:

1. Emotional and Relational Context. Family crimes occur within intimate relationships characterized by emotional dependency, shared history, and asymmetrical power. These conditions create a cycle of control, fear, and guilt that inhibits victims from reporting.

2. Chronicity and Escalation. Domestic crimes often begin with minor incidents and escalate over time. Violence becomes normalized within the household, reinforcing behavioural cycles.

3. Latent Nature. Family-based crime is significantly underreported due to psychological dependency, fear of retaliation, shame, economic constraints, and cultural taboos. Latency undermines accurate criminological assessment and obstructs timely intervention.

4. Intergenerational Transmission. Children exposed to violence in the home experience long-term developmental harm and are more likely to become perpetrators or victims in adulthood. This contributes to the perpetuation of violent family structures.

5. Gendered Patterns. Statistical and empirical findings show that women disproportionately experience domestic violence, while men more often occupy the role of offenders. However, elderly and child victims are also substantial groups.

6. Multidimensional Determinants. Psychological disorders, substance abuse, economic stress, unemployment, cultural norms, and low social support all contribute to family-based criminality. No single factor explains the phenomenon in isolation.

These findings indicate that domestic crime is not a spontaneous event but a patterned behavioural process embedded in social and cultural structures.

DISCUSSION

The discussion situates the results within broader criminological debates. Domestic crime is best understood as a systemic phenomenon shaped by intertwined individual, relational, and structural influences. Prevention efforts must therefore extend beyond traditional punitive measures.

One major implication is the need for early intervention. Strengthening parental education, stress management, and conflict resolution skills can reduce the risk of violence. Schools and community programs play a critical role in identifying at-risk families and providing support.

The gendered dimension of domestic violence requires targeted policies promoting gender equality, economic empowerment, and legal protection for vulnerable individuals. Criminological evidence shows that societies with higher levels of gender equality report lower rates of intimate partner violence.

Another central theme is the role of social services. Effective prevention requires coordinated action between police, medical professionals, psychologists, and community organizations. Multidisciplinary response teams have proven effective in countries like Canada, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

Additionally, legal reforms must focus on both protection and accountability. Protective orders, mandatory reporting for severe cases, and penalties for coercive control enhance safety; however, they must be enforced consistently to achieve real impact.

Finally, prevention must address cultural norms. Public education campaigns that challenge attitudes tolerating violence, promote healthy relationships, and encourage help-seeking behaviour are essential to long-term change.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that family-based crime is a multifaceted and deeply rooted phenomenon requiring comprehensive criminological understanding and intersectoral preventive strategies. Its determinants include psychological instability, socio-economic stress, cultural norms supporting dominance, and weak institutional responses.

Preventing domestic crime requires a combination of legal protection, social support, psychological services, economic empowerment, and community engagement. Long-term solutions depend on transforming cultural norms, strengthening families, and building social environments that promote equality, respect, and emotional well-being.

Understanding family-based crime through a criminological lens allows policymakers, practitioners, and communities to develop interventions that address both immediate protection needs and long-term structural reforms.

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