Juvenile Delinquency Prevention in the Czech Republic and Lithuania: Designing an Efficient Strategy of Social Intervention

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Main Aims of the Study

- Present the state strategy of youth crime prevention in the Czech Republic and Lithuania
- Compare the approach of state institutions and responsible officials to the solution of youth criminality
- Examine implementation of crime prevention programs for children and youth on local level
- Define the most promising forms of social intervention on the level of program
- Design the policy implementation and evaluation model
Significance

- Rapid growth of youth criminality in the period of transformation
- Collapse of total social control over citizens: destruction of social services and youth organizations
- Decreased ability of family and school to social control in transition society
- Introduction of state establishment of new-type activities and social services for children in risk
- Lack of evaluation studies assessing the implementation of preventive activities in the Czech Republic and Lithuania.
Methodology

- Secondary data analysis
  - history
  - statistical fluctuations
  - official projects and reports
  - analysis of the projects and reports of local social crime prevention programs

- Primary data:
  - qualitative interviews on state and local level
  - the process evaluation: short period of policy existence makes it impossible to rely on correlation between preventive activities and statistical changes in youth criminality
Flexible design field research

- Program Selection
  - using criteria defined on national and local level
  - snow-ball selection of programs/respondents
  - Open-end interviews with program coordinators
  - interview protocol to test the knowledge and experience of program coordinator
Interview Protocol

- Three parts of the questioner
- Interviews enable process evaluation
  - on national level included program integrity, level of centralization, control and responsibility, coordination, vertical and horizontal communication, cooperation with institutions and municipalities, availability of funds
  - on the level of program: main program goals, planning, extensity, intensity, continuity, methods of works
Theoretical Model

Individual

Low Self Control

Society

Social Bond

Anomie, Strain
Low Opportunities,
Subcultures

Learning
Differential Association
Routine Activity
Labeling

Social Control
Strong Self Control

Delinquent Behavior
Main Theoretical Premises

- Sociologically informed criminology
- Psychopathology of crime
- Theory of social control
- Prediction, preventive planning and preventive strategy
- Policy cycle model
# State Politics of Crime Prevention in Czech Republic and Lithuania: Compared

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<tr>
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<th>CZ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused on control (directed to all groups)</td>
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<td>Focused on support (directed to youth)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No distinction btw social and situational prevention</td>
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<td>No clearly defined role of separate ministries</td>
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<td>Lack of coordination in financing mechanism</td>
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<td>Absence of central coordinating body</td>
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<td>Lack of information about the system</td>
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<td>Lack of evaluation on local level</td>
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<td>Lack of coordination on the local level</td>
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<td>Lack of funding</td>
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Qualitative Data Analysis

- Primary data categorization:
  - by the type of organization
  - by the number of participants
  - by the age and social characteristics of participants
  - by the background and experience of coordinator
  - by the intensity and institutional cooperation
  - communication with similar programs
How coordinators defined their clients

- Street children: children
- Problems in their personality
- Family problems
- Problems at school
- Age: the most problematic are adolescents (14-15)
- Type of program activities
Main problems of program implementation
According to the results of qualitative survey:

On the institutional level:

- Legislation problems
- Definition problems
- Lack of communication and cooperation
- Accountability problem
- Funding
On the level of program:
- Lack of programs of secondary and tertiary prevention
- Lack of programs targeted on family intervention
- Repressive approach to deviant children and youth
- Short-term activities
- Weak correlation of activities focused on family, school and free time management
- Weak continuity of programs: lack of information about clients after they exit the program
- Unwillingness to involve risk-group children
Conclusion

1. Program design: prediction, preventive planning, methods of work, strategy of intervention: activities to strengthen social bonds and self-control

2. Policy implementation: legislation, institutional structure, funding mechanism, centralization, communication

3. Policy evaluation: how to assess prevention?
Model Program: based on combined intervention to family, school and community

Triangle of Social Intervention

School

Program

Children

Family
State Strategy Implementation
How to organize prevention?

National Coordinator

Financial Audit /Independent Monitoring and Evaluation/Information System

Agents on the Regional Level
  - Family
  - School
  - Community

Agents on the Regional Level

Local Agents

Programs of Prevention
Policy Assessment: process evaluation based on qualitative data

- Evaluation should test if policy implementation satisfy two criteria:
  - *Construct validity*: the adequacy of theory about what makes program effective and whether it was implemented properly
  - *External validity*: generalizability of the observed efforts