

**THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIMINALITY IN ROMANIA
– EVOLUTIONS AND TENDENCIES –**

Maria Voinea, Dan Banciu
University of Bucharest

In Romania, the official police and justice statistics offer few information and data about the intensity of violent crimes and their victims. Only few research projects are trying to explain the causes and motives of crime, as well as the role of the victim in the genesis of crime. This study is trying to focus on the main tendencies in the evolution of violent crimes, on the typology of victims and aggressors in intra and extra familial surrounds, in order to identify solutions to prevent the victimization of persons.

Criminality and violence in the Romanian society

The evolution of contemporary societies evinces the fact that, despite the intensification of the intervention of social control factors in the prevention of criminality, we witness a recrudescence and amplification of violent and aggressive acts against the life and physical integrity of people, which produce numerous human victims and material losses, generating feelings of fear and social insecurity.

Violent criminality “covers a large specter of behaviors, with a complex etiology” (R.M. Stănoiu *et al.*, 1994), which includes the unlawful acts and crimes committed against the individual (manslaughter, rape, physical aggression of all types, simple or serious battery, physical attack resulting in death etc.), as well as those committed against the individual and their patrimony (robbery, thefts etc). Representing a social problem, with destructive and demoralizing consequences at the level of individuals and social groups, violent crimes and murders become salient by the high degree of social perilousness, as they entail the use of force and physical coercion on individuals, resulting in major material and moral prejudices caused to the victims, most of times irreparable in nature. Having a complex etiology, within which several elements are involved – the author of violence, the violent action and the victim of violence –, violent criminality is sensibly influenced, during the period of transition that the Romanian society is undergoing, by the drop in efficiency of the institutions specialized in social control, the dissolution of community social control and social solidarity networks, as well as the diminution of the prestige and efficiency of the justice system and the police force in the fight against and firm sanctioning of aggressors and effective, moral and material reparations for the victims (D. Banciu *et al.*, 2002). Among the factors that augment the various forms of violent criminality one can enumerate, also, the poverty of the population and the economic difficulties experienced by a series of individuals, lack of education, immorality and violence instated in society, frequent and excessive alcohol consumption, negative influence exerted by some entourages and street gangs, disorganization of the family etc. (S. Rădulescu, 1998)

The studies and researches carried out in various countries, including Romania, exhibit that the violent crimes and murders present certain particularities, such as (D. Banciu *et al.*, 2002):