

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND CRIMINALITY

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Abstract

This article addresses the issue of social exclusion and its connection with crime. The authors emphasise that the concepts of poverty and social exclusion are very often incorrectly equated, even though exclusion may also stem from other factors. The paper is divided into two parts and encompasses a theoretical framework (sociological, criminological, and economic theories; Merton's theory of anomie; the theory of social disorganisation; and rational choice in criminology) as well as practical examples that lead to the presentation of conclusions. Attention is also devoted to contemporary approaches that view social exclusion as a relative, multidimensional, and dynamic process. Empirical data from the World Bank, Eurostat, the United Nations, and regional security indices indicate that between 2.33 and 2.43 billion people, or about 32% of the world's population, are at risk of social exclusion. In the second part of the paper, the relationship between social exclusion and crime in the contemporary world is examined through statistical data and information from scientific and journalistic sources.

Key words: social exclusion, crime, poverty, social inequality, internal security.

СОЦИЈАЛНА ИСКЉУЧЕНОСТ И КРИМИНАЛИТЕТ

Апстракт

Овај рад бави се питањем социјалне искључености и њене повезаности са криминалитетом. Аутори истичу да се појмови сиромаштва и социјалне искључености често погрешно поистовећују, иако искљученост може проистичати и из других фактора. Рад је подељен на два дела и обухвата теоријски оквир (социолошке, криминолошке и економске теорије; Мертонову теорију аномије; теорију социјалне дезорганизације; као и рационални избор у криминологији), као и практичне примере који воде ка изношењу закључака. Посебна пажња посвећена је и савременим приступима који социјалну искљученост посматрају као релативан, вишедимензионалан и динамичан процес. Емпиријски подаци Светске банке, Евростата, Уједињених нација и регионалних безбедносних индекса указују на то да је између 2,33 и 2,43 милијарде људи, односно око 32% светске популације,

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изложено ризику од социјалне искључености. У другом делу рада, однос између социјалне искључености и криминалитета у савременом свету разматра се кроз статистичке податке и информације из научних и публицистичких извора.

Кључне речи: социјална искљученост, криминалитет, сиромаштво, друштвена неједнакост, унутрашња безбедност.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE AND METHODOLOGY

First of all, it is essential to answer the question of what social exclusion is, why it represents a major social problem, and how it is connected with crime and internal security. The paper explores theoretical frameworks and the reasons why poverty is equated with social exclusion, and the extent to which this is justified. In addition, the question arises as to what other forms of exclusion exist beyond poverty and how they shape the contemporary world we live in.

The paper is designed so that one part relies on a theoretical framework, while the other is empirical. The theoretical framework analyses sociological, criminological, and economic theories, anomie theory, the theory of social disorganisation, and rational choice in criminology. The empirical part of the research consists of statistical analyses of data from the World Bank, Eurostat, the United Nations, and regional security indices. According to available sources, between 2.33 and 2.43 billion people, or about 32% of the world's population, are at risk of social exclusion. The most vulnerable regions are South and East Asia and the Pacific, with India and China accounting for the largest share of the affected population, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa, which has been undergoing major social crises in recent decades.

Poverty is identified as one of the most influential, but not the only cause of social exclusion, which leads to the emergence of criminal behaviour among individuals or social groups. Using official statistical data from the Global Organised Crime Index website, a parallel is drawn between the ten poorest countries in the world and the ten countries with the highest organised crime index scores.

In conclusion, the paper seeks to answer the question of what the connections between social exclusion and crime are and how these connections should be properly understood. A correct understanding of social exclusion represents a key prerequisite for improving security, social justice, and the quality of life in contemporary society.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AS A RESEARCH PROBLEM

The topic of social exclusion is deeply humanitarian because it highlights the vulnerabilities of our society and social groups that need support in the fight against marginalisation, poverty, and conditions that threaten human life, integrity, and dignity. The emergence of crime and the way

society interprets and combats it are closely linked to social exclusion, as we established at the beginning of the paper, within the theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches to this topic.

We must also point to a particular conceptual problem. Namely, in the literature and in statistical data, the concepts of poverty and social exclusion are often used as synonyms, cited interchangeably, and are taken to denote the same phenomenon (Eurostat, 2015–2025). This has its logic, given that poverty is traditionally perceived as the first and basic factor of social exclusion. However, social exclusion is not necessarily based on poverty, as it can “also arise from other factors, such as ethnic or racial discrimination” (Cuesta et al., 2024). However, data on these phenomena are partially or entirely lacking. Social exclusion affects some communities or neighbourhoods more intensively than others, with clusters of problems such as financial deprivation, limited employment opportunities, inefficient public transportation, and poor-quality schools and housing. This ‘concentration’ of disadvantage may contribute to a negative reputation, leaving residents feeling stigmatised (crimeinfo.org.uk). Social exclusion clusters are characterised by urban location, opportunities for illegal income that may be highly visible to young people, and high rates of drug use. Individuals with weak ties to the community as a result of social exclusion lack informal mechanisms of social control. In these communities, economic disadvantage can become concentrated, leading to widespread social exclusion. As a result, the crimes and violence in the community do not receive the attention they need from political officials, police officers, and community service providers” (Christian & Howson, 2023).

Social exclusion is a key topic among many scientists and can be seen as a significant threat to internal security (Kari, 2016, p. 8). If we analyse social exclusion as a security threat, we can say that it is more likely that it can be connected to criminality:

- “The number of the socially excluded due to unemployment, poverty, inequality, insufficient integration of foreigners, illnesses or substance abuse and the number of those who get outside society, may increase. Falling into a criminal way of life is still largely part of the process of social exclusion. (MI 44/2004, 2004, p. 17; Kari, 2016, p. 9). Society may increase. Falling into a criminal way of life is still mostly a part of the development of social exclusion” (MI 44/2004, 2004, p. 17; Kari, 2016, p. 9).
- “Social exclusion is the biggest threat to internal security. Unemployment and other income problems, such as over-indebtedness, increase income differences between individuals, contributing to poverty and the risk of exclusion” (MI 25/2008, 2008, p. 7; (Kari, 2016, p. 9).
- “Social exclusion is one of the key factors underlying security issues. Exclusion often involves substance abuse. Excessive substance use in combination with other factors promoting exclu-

sion may accelerate and exacerbate an individual's loss of control of life and his or her falling outside may accelerate and exacerbate an individual's loss of control of life and his or her falling outside may accelerate and exacerbate an individual's loss of control of life and his or her falling outside and society at large too." (MI 40/2012, 2012, 12; Kari, 2016, p. 9).

The well-known sociologist of Argentine origin, Ronaldo Munck, in his 2005 book "Globalisation and Social Exclusion: A Transformationalist Perspective," gives the simplest definition of social exclusion on the first page: "all the ways people are excluded from the necessities of life" (Munck, 2005). Munck agrees that social exclusion and poverty are not synonyms, though poverty can be a cause of exclusion. The German sociologist Heinz Steiner, referring to Marxist ideology, says that "social exclusion is an in-built design feature of capitalism" (Steinert, 2021).

However, social exclusion does not always mean that society or a specific community has excluded or marginalised an individual or a particular group for a specific reason. The Dutch sociologist Mariska van der Horst reminds us that there is also internalised age discrimination and social exclusion. In other words, a phenomenon in which a person excludes themselves, based on an internal feeling that they are too old, insufficiently valuable, pessimistic about their health and physical condition (van der Horst, 2019). This is also contributed to by the current state of Western culture, in which there is tremendous pressure on individuals and society to remain eternally young and beautiful, attractive, yet also work-capable, practical, and valuable. At the moment when a person can no longer follow the imposed "trend" in their way of life, they turn against themselves. Of course, self-exclusion can also include the creation of a subculture, especially among young people, and deliberate exclusion from the mainstream way of life. According to sociologist Jan Terpstra, this involves seeking an authentic identity through social exclusion (Terpstra, 2006). "Social exclusion can be both a cause and a consequence of crime, but causality is difficult to determine given that many offenders are multiply excluded (e.g., they live in poverty and have little family support, access to education, adequate housing, or jobs). According to crimeinfo.org.uk, both "offenders and victims of crimes often suffer from one or more aspects of social exclusion [stemming from] factors such as family change, drug misuse, or mental health problems." In both the US and in the UK, statistics show that "the 5% most disadvantaged are 100 times more likely to have multiple problems (e.g., conduct disorders, police contact, cannabis use, mood disorders and alcohol abuse)," according to Newcastle JSNA, and more likely to be "perpetrators and victims of crime" (Christian & Howson, 2023).

In the article "Concepts of Social Exclusion, Measures and Global Estimates," three experts, José Cuesta (World Bank, Washington), Borja López-Noval (University of Lyon, Spain), and Miguel Niño-Zarazúa

(SOAS University of London), present views on the causes and consequences of social exclusion and statistical data applicable worldwide. Their concise research, recognised and very positively evaluated in the scientific community, is based on three aspects: the conceptual framework of social exclusion (relative, multidimensional, and dynamic characteristics of exclusion); the methodology of macro-counting (measuring populations exposed to the risk of exclusion based on identity, circumstances, and socio-economic conditions); the empirical strategy (for estimating populations exposed to the risk of social exclusion by dimensions of exclusion at the global and regional level)“ (Cuesta et al., 2024).

Their conclusions are as follows: “between 2.33 and 2.43 billion people, that is, about 32 per cent of the world’s population, are exposed to the risk of social exclusion” (Cuesta et al., 2024). The most challenging situation is in the regions of South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific, where they estimate that around 1.3 billion people are at risk of social exclusion. India and China account for 840 million of the stated number” (Cuesta et al., 2024).

The roots of understanding of crime rates can be found in ecological theories: “In Becker’s economic theory of crime from 1968, areas of high inequality place poor individuals who have low returns from market activity next to high-income individuals who have goods worth taking, thereby increasing the returns to time allocated to criminal activity. Merton’s strain theory, from 1938, argues that when faced with the relative success of others around them, unsuccessful individuals feel frustrated by their situation. The greater the inequality, the higher this strain and the greater the inducement for low-status individuals to commit crime. Shaw and McKay, in their 1942 social disorganisation theory, argue that crime occurs when the mechanisms of social control are weakened. Factors that weaken a community’s ability to regulate its members are poverty, racial heterogeneity, residential mobility, and family instability. In this case, inequality is associated with crime because it is linked to poverty: areas with high inequality tend to have high poverty rates” (Kelly, 2000, 530). When we speak directly about poverty, the most comprehensive data comes from the World Bank, which we will analyse in more detail in the continuation of the paper. Namely, according to World Bank data, “around 8.5% of the world’s population (which is about 700 million people) lives in extreme poverty, with less than 2.15 US dollars per day” (World Bank, 2024). The situation deteriorated sharply after 2020, with the coronavirus pandemic, increased population vulnerability, and reduced financial income (i.e., job losses), among other factors. According to the cited data, the pandemic made poor countries even poorer, leading to profound existential insecurities for their inhabitants. The World Bank also states that “around 44% of the world’s population (around 3.5 billion people) is considered poor, in relation to the most developed parts of the world,” with less than 6.85 dollars per day. In 2024, Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest percentage of its population living in extreme poverty (as high as 67%)” (World Bank, 2024).

Based on current trends, the World Bank estimates that “622 million people (7.3% of the world’s population) will live in extreme poverty in 2030. It is also estimated that around 3.4 billion people (almost 40% of the world’s population) will likely live on less than 6.85 dollars per day” (World Bank, 2024). Nevertheless, despite the prominence of these figures, estimates indicate that the number of impoverished people will decrease year by year.

There are numerous points of view on crime, and in this paper, two of the most influential will be analysed:

- For functionalists, “crime is a normal part of healthy societies: the rule-breaking associated with crime serves to highlight shared norms and values and reaffirm the basis of society. Thus, from this perspective, crime is even considered necessary to secure and maintain society’s moral foundation. However, such a view takes little account of how crime is distributed across social groups. As research suggests, crime is disproportionately perpetrated and shared by the poorest groups in society. Moreover, functionalist approaches to crime assume that there is consensus about what constitutes right and wrong actions or behaviours—not so, argue some scholars. For instance, some people are labelled as wrongdoers or criminals because their rule-breaking violates a social norm; thus, the act itself is not necessarily a crime (nor is the person inherently a criminal)” (Christian & Howson, 2023). The most influential claim that deviance is a normal aspect of society begins with Émile Durkheim, whose theory was later refined in the aforementioned strain theory. Namely, he claims that “deviance is a natural aspect of society, one that possesses functional properties”, which can be a jarring premise that does not easily resonate with our logical or intuitive instincts. Indeed, most morally upright citizens go to great lengths to eradicate criminal activity, either by vigilantly guarding their homes or communities à la neighbourhood watch, or by conscientiously occupying careers such as police officers and military personnel. However, social scientists have long isolated behaviour that, from the layperson’s standards, seems to defy a sense of shrewd discernment” (Cynthia, 2023).
- Rational Choice Theory in criminology, developed significantly by Derek Cornish and Ronald Clarke in the 1980s: “Cornish and Clarke’s initial interest in offenders’ decision making can be traced to their prior research for the Home Office Research and Planning Unit. In the 1960s and 1970s, their evaluative research demonstrated how environmental factors could influence the behaviour of institutionalised delinquents. More specifically, they recognised that both situational incentives and opportunities for delinquency affected the rates of absconding and misconduct in these institutions. These findings sparked Cornish and Clarke’s interest in situational crime prevention and deterrence and, later,

their curiosity about offenders' decision-making processes. They realised that before any useful policies could be created, it would be necessary to become familiar with offenders' cognitive information-processing abilities. In particular, Cornish and Clarke were interested in how offenders perceive environmental opportunities, legal sanctions, and the potential costs and benefits of their actions" (Cornish and Clarke, 2010, p. 216).

Cuesta and his associates emphasise that people are exposed to the risk of social exclusion "because their identities differ from established norms and customs." The concept of "identity" may vary, including gender, age, race, caste, ethnic characteristics, or religious and political affiliations. Of course, it is essential to understand that identity does not imply the inevitability of social exclusion, but rather the risk of it. Furthermore, persons who are forcibly displaced due to conflict, poverty, or who are victims of gender-based violence may be at risk of exclusion. Poverty, again, is the dominant factor, because due to an "unfavorable socioeconomic position, people are more likely to be exposed to exclusion, since a low level of education, unemployment, or poverty limit their opportunities to access the labor market, credit and insurance markets, as well as the exercise of political rights" (Cuesta et al., 2024).

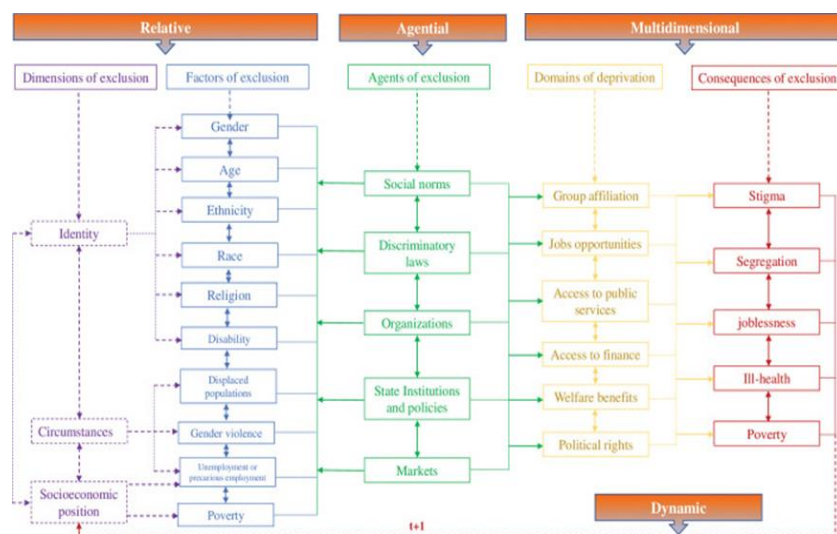


Figure 1. Conceptual frameworks of social exclusion (according to Cuesta et al., 2024)

When we speak about statistical data on social exclusion, before citing any data, we must take into account the following facts. First of all, to date, there has been no systematic, comprehensive attempt to estimate their

numbers at the global and regional levels. All estimates we cite in this paper, and those found in other scientific works, are approximate, as evidenced by data from the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, and other related organisations that address the same issue. But even this lack of facts can be an indicator of social neglect or, at least, a lack of systematisation in the collection of scientific data, which would realistically point to some of humanity's deepest problems.

CRIMINALITY AS A RESULT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

To explain the causal relationships between social exclusion and crime, we will first refer to the views of criminologist Dr Ian Walmsley, Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of the West of England and a former member of DHI staff. Walmsley emphasises the importance of the book by Kate Pickett and Richard G. Wilkinson, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, which is based on the argument that “national crime rates are strongly correlated with levels of social inequality” (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2009). Moreover, depending on the types of socially excluded groups, corresponding types of crime can emerge. For example, marginalised social groups affected by poverty most often engage in property crime.

Walmsley draws attention to a particular form of social hypocrisy in cases where criminal behaviour emerges among individuals or groups. Namely, he explains that it is not only the individual or group that manifests criminal behaviour who are to blame, but also society, which has directly or indirectly produced such behaviour. He states that “confronting the link between social exclusion and involvement in crime is not straightforward when we consider that social disadvantage has been deeply embedded in the structures and institutions of British society for many decades. This embeddedness has, it can be argued, been further exacerbated by criminal justice system institutions and policies that glorify individual responsibility while simultaneously downplaying or silencing collective and social responsibilities” (Walmsley, 2025).

Naturally, when criminal behaviour occurs, according to Walmsley, the first question society asks is the question of punishment, that is, what decision the criminal justice system will make. “Criminal justice, in that sense, directs the disciplinary apparatus of the state toward correcting the individual, rather than recognising the structural influences on individual behaviour” (Walmsley, 2025). In other words, society does not ask where it has failed or how to avoid repeating those mistakes, but rather how the offender will be punished.

In support of this, Walmsley, in his reflection on crime in Great Britain, cites the following: “The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness has acknowledged that 15% of newly sentenced prisoners

reported being homeless before entering prison, and a third of people sleeping rough in London had been in prison” (Walmsley, 2025). This creates an impression of an unjust and unstoppable cyclical movement—an individual or group affected by (extreme) poverty commits a property crime. Society condemns and imprisons them, rather than striving to understand the phenomenon and prevent similar occurrences in the future. The offender serves a prison sentence, is released, returns to the streets, and faces the same problems that led them into crime in the first place.

Cambridge professor of Swedish origin, Per-Olof H. Wikström, has made a significant scholarly contribution to the study of the causal relationships between social exclusion and crime by developing Situational Action Theory (SAT). According to Wikström, this theory consists of three main hypotheses:

“Hypothesis 1: Differences between people in crime involvement are due to differences in their crime propensity and criminogenic exposure. SAT asserts that a person’s crime propensity is essentially a consequence of his or her personal morals and ability to exercise self-control. At the same time, a setting’s criminogeneity is a consequence of its moral context (its moral norms and their enforcement)” (Wikström et al, 2012).

“Hypothesis 2: Differences in crime involvement by disadvantaged groups are due to the fact that more people who grow up and live in disadvantaged circumstances develop a high crime propensity and are more frequently exposed to criminogenic settings” (Wikström & Treiber, 2016; similar conclusion: Wikström & Loeber, 2000).

“Hypothesis 3: Differences in the number of crime-prone people and the extent of their criminogenic exposure by disadvantaged group are a consequence of disadvantage-related differences resulting from (rules and resource-based) social and self-selection processes” (Wikström & Treiber, 2016).

It is important to note that not all sociologists agree with the assertion that poverty is the leading cause of crime. One of them is sociologist Robert J. Sampson. In his 2000 article “Whither the sociological study of crime?”, Sampson offers a very bold conclusion: “Everybody believes that ‘poverty causes crime,’ it seems; in fact, I have heard many a senior sociologist express frustration as to why criminologists would waste time with theories outside the poverty paradigm. The reason we do ... is that the facts demand it” (Sampson, 2000).

In the remainder of the text, we will move from the global to the individual level; that is, we will focus on specific regions of the world, social exclusion according to different criteria, and overall crime rates to identify the connections among them. Naturally, in line with the theories previously presented in the text, we will adhere to different criteria of social exclusion, not only poverty and crime indices recorded in the given territories. In the conclusion, we should answer the question: which types of social exclusion are most prevalent, and how do they affect crime levels,

the functioning of the judicial system, and, more broadly, the security of everyday life for ordinary people.

According to 2025 statistics from the Global Organised Crime Index (OC Index), we identify the ten countries with the highest indices.

Rank	Country	Criminality Score (2025)
1	Myanmar	8.08
2	Colombia	7.82
3	Mexico	7.68
4	Paraguay	7.48
5	Ecuador	7.48
6	Democratic Republic of the Congo	7.47
7	South Africa	7.43
8	Nigeria	7.32
9	Lebanon	7.30
10	Turkey	7.20

Figure 2. Global Organised Crime Index (Ocindex, 2025)

The index ranges from 1 to 10, with “Myanmar ranking first at 8.08, the highest in the world. Following Myanmar, the top ten countries include Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Ecuador, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Nigeria, Lebanon, and Turkey” (Ocindex, 2025).

We now face the task of identifying the link between (extreme) poverty and crime levels. The countries listed below have the highest Criminality Scores in the Global Organised Crime Index. Poverty figures are approximate and vary depending on whether international (e.g. USD 2.15/day) or national poverty lines are used, as well as by year of measurement.

Although there is not necessarily a direct or equivalent relationship between poverty and crime, that relationship is nevertheless strong, as can be seen from the statistical data presented. On this occasion, we will refer to the interpretation offered by human rights activist and microbiologist Laura Marti, who draws a parallel with the society of the United States of America and explains causal relationships as follows. The Global Organised Crime Index for the United States stands at “5.87 and has been slightly increasing each year” (Ocindex, 2025). At the same time, “the poverty rate in the United States is 18%” (World Population, 2026). Still, Laura Marti argues that poverty in the United States is not the main factor of social exclusion and is not the primary cause of crime. On the contrary, she points to “other forms of social exclusion that can be analysed as causes, which are based on racial, ethnic, gender affiliation, and other identity-related factors” (Marti, 2024). Laura Marti begins by stating that these forms of social exclusion are deeply “rooted in American society, beginning with the period of colonialism” (Marti, 2024). Despite the image of a democratic society, “the struggle for human rights, and laws adopted over decades to guarantee freedom and life to all American citizens, the

marginalisation of certain social groups due to their differences remains an integral part of contemporary American society” (Marti, 2024).

Country	Poverty Level (approx.)
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	Very high — around 74–75% of the population lives below the international extreme-poverty line (USD 2.15/day).
Nigeria	High — about 32% in extreme poverty; broader estimates suggest 40%+ are poor under national thresholds.
South Africa	Moderate to high — estimates often range around 50–55% depending on the poverty line, reflecting extreme inequality.
Myanmar (Burma)	Moderate–high — multidimensional poverty estimates around 17–18%, with recent political instability worsening conditions.
Colombia	Moderate — roughly 36–40% of the population below the national poverty lines in recent years.
Mexico	Moderate — approximately 29–36%, depending on methodology and year.
Paraguay	Lower relative to others on this list — around 23–24% under national poverty measures.
Ecuador	Moderate — estimates generally fall in the 30–40% range.
Lebanon	Very high (recent crisis) — Poverty has increased dramatically since 2020; reliable recent percentages vary, but social conditions have sharply deteriorated.
Turkey	Low extreme poverty, higher relative poverty — under 5% below the international extreme-poverty line, but significantly higher rates under national and relative poverty measures.

Figure 3. Poverty Levels (World Population, 2026)

Similar conclusions were reached by representatives of the Race and Ethnicity Policy team at the Centre for American Progress: Danyelle Solomon, Vice President; Connor Maxwell, Policy Analyst; and Abril Castro, Research Assistant. They conducted their research using the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) to measure racial disparities in self-reported homeownership. The data they analysed covered the period from 2013 to 2017 (Solomon et al., 2019). Thus, Solomon and her colleagues presented alarming data to the public that may be characterised as social exclusion based on race. As many as “22% of American Indians and Alaska Native peoples lived in poverty in 2017,” while “8% of white people lived in poverty in 2017” (Solomon et al., 2019). The population of African Americans in cities is declining. For comparison, Solomon and her colleagues cite data showing that in “1970, 71% of Washington, D.C.’s population was Black, whereas in 2015 that share had fallen to 48%” (Solomon et al., 2019). From 2000 to 2013, “more than 20,000 Black residents were displaced from Washington, D.C. In 2019, 23% of the Black population of Washington, D.C. lived in poverty” (Solomon et al., 2019).

There are numerous examples of social exclusion based on race in the United States, despite the constant efforts of human rights activists and humanitarian organisations. People of Native American and African American origin have lower levels of education than the white population, hold significantly fewer high-ranking positions in society, and are two to three times less likely to own property than white people” (Solomon et al., 2019). However, in addition to Native Americans and Black Americans, sociologists in the 21st century also “warn of social exclusion based on religious affiliation, particularly in the case of Muslim and Arab immigrants after the 9/11 terrorist attacks” (Lee, 2022, pp. 195–196), as well as narratives “portraying Latinos and descendants of Indigenous peoples as a “burden on the state” (Ayón, 2016), and immigrants as “illegal and undesirable—especially Mexicans, whom the Trump administration has targeted since his first term by building a wall along the border” (Pierce et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional social phenomenon that must be approached methodologically and with the awareness that it cannot be reduced solely to poverty, even though poverty is the most influential factor. Empirical data confirm that communities exposed to certain forms of social exclusion are at greater risk of involvement in criminal activities.

To effectively combat crime, society must first reassess its attitudes toward certain phenomena, as well as toward individuals and other communities. Today, almost one-third of the world’s population faces the risk of social exclusion, giving this problem a global dimension. The most vulnerable regions of the world (South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa) also record elevated rates of organised and property crime.

An analysis of the Global Organised Crime Index indicates a strong correlation between social exclusion and high crime rates in certain countries. Nevertheless, the paper confirms the views of authors who warn that poverty is not the sole or decisive cause of criminal behaviour. Other forms of social exclusion, such as those based on race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, or gender, also play an essential role.

It is also essential to consider the manner in which the criminal justice system operates, as it often responds repressively while neglecting the structural causes of crime. When criminal behaviour by individuals or groups occurs, society tends to focus on the severity of the (prison) sentence, rather than on the causes of the event and how such outcomes could be systematically prevented in the future. Examples from Great Britain and the United States show how the very structure of the state can foster social inequalities that lead to crime, which then circulates in a cycle.

An effective fight against crime requires a sustained, systematic effort to address social exclusion. This demands profound changes in society, and the question remains whether contemporary society is mature enough to implement them. Social exclusion must be viewed as a structural problem and as a key step in the fight against crime and in ensuring the security of individuals and entire communities.

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СОЦИЈАЛНА ИСКЉУЧЕНОСТ И КРИМИНАЛИТЕТ

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Резиме

Овај рад се бави анализом социјалне искључености као сложеног и вишедимензионалног друштвеног феномена и повезаности са криминалитетом у савременом свету. Аутори полазе од теоријских и емпиријских приступа, указују на устаљену и методолошки проблематичну праксу поистовећивања сиромаштва и социјалне искључености. Наглашавају да искљученост може проистичати и из других фактора, као што су етничка, расна, родна, верска или старосна дискриминација, као и структурне неједнакости унутар друштва.

У теоријском делу рада разматрају се кључне социолошке, криминолошке и економске теорије, укључујући Мертонову теорију аномије, теорију социјалне дезорганизације и теорију рационалног избора у криминологији. Ове теорије доприносе разумевању узрока криминалног понашања у условима друштвене маргинализације која проистиче из различитих фактора.

Емпиријски део истраживања заснива се на анализи података Светске банке, Евростата, Уједињених нација и Глобалног индекса организованог криминала. Према доступним подацима, између 2,33 и 2,43 милијарде људи, односно око 32% светске популације, изложено је ризику од социјалне искључености. Сходно томе, најугроженији региони су Јужна и Источна Азија, Пацифик и подсахарска Африка. Истакнута је значајна корелација између одређених облика социјалне искључености и повећаних стопа криминалитета, посебно имовинског и организованог криминала.

У закључку, рад истиче да ефикасна борба против криминалитета подразумева свеобухватно разумевање социјалне искључености као структурног проблема, а не само инсистирање на кажњавању појединца када се криминално понашање догоди. Уместо репресивних мера, пре свега је неопходан системски приступ који укључује социјалну политику, смањење неједнакости и јачање социјалне кохезије, како би се унапредила безбедност и квалитет живота појединаца и читавих заједница.