

SHOULD TEENAGERS BE TRIED AS ADULTS IF THEY COMMIT HEINOUS CRIMES (13-16)

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Annotation: This article analyzes types of serious crimes committed by teenagers aged 13–16, particularly cases of murder, and discusses whether adolescents should be punished as adults when such incidents occur. The article examines the overall development of teenagers, including their psychological state, level of responsibility, and the justice system in detail. It also discusses the balance between punishment and rehabilitation.

Keywords: teenagers, crime, murder, justice, responsibility, rehabilitation

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada 13 -16 yosh o'smirlar qilayotgan og'ir jinoyat turlari, xususan qotillik holatlari yuz berganda, o'smirlarni kattalar kabi jazolash masalasi tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada o'smirlarning har tomonlama rivojlanishi, shuningdek psixologik holati, javobgarlik darajasi hamda adolat tizimi batafsil ko'rib chiqiladi. Shu bilan birgalikda jazo va reabilitatsiya o'rtasidagi muvozanat haqida muhokama qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: o'smirlar, jinoyat, qotillik, adolat, javobgarlik, reabilitatsiya

Аннотация: Данная статья анализирует виды тяжких преступлений, совершаемых подростками в возрасте 13–16 лет, особенно случаи убийства, и рассматривает вопрос о том, следует ли судить подростков как взрослых в таких ситуациях. В статье подробно изучаются общее развитие подростков, их психологическое состояние, уровень ответственности, а также система правосудия. Также обсуждается баланс между наказанием и реабилитацией.

Ключевые слова: подростки, преступление, убийство, справедливость, ответственность, реабилитация

MAIN BODY

One of the most debated topics in modern criminal justice systems is whether adolescents aged 13–16 should be prosecuted as adults when they commit severe offences such as homicide. This topic generates strong discussions among psychologists, legal professionals, and society at large. Some people believe that serious offences should always receive equal punishment, despite their age, while others argue that teenagers should be treated differently because of their developmental stage. A main argument for prosecuting teenagers as adults is the seriousness of the offence itself. Killing and other aggressive acts cause permanent damage to victims and their families. Advocates of harsh punishment believe that if a young person is able to commit such a serious crime, they should also be able to receive adult punishment. From this point, equal punishment ensures justice and may also discourage other teenagers from engaging in criminal behavior. Moreover, some legal specialists suggest that same level of punishment works as a prevention method. The idea is that if minors are aware that they may face consequences similar to adults, including extended imprisonment, they may be reduced likelihood of criminal activity. In this way, strict legal punishment is viewed as a tool for maintaining social stability in society and stopping future criminal acts.

However, an alternative perspective highlights the psychological differences between adolescents and adults. Academic research in neuroscience shows that the human brain is not fully developed until the mid-20s, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for control over impulses, decision-making, and cognitive decision process. This biological fact suggests that teenagers are naturally more impulsive and emotionally reactive, which may reduce their ability to fully evaluate the consequences of their actions.

However, an opposing viewpoint highlights the developmental differences between adolescents and adults. Scientific research in neuroscience shows that the human brain continues to develop until the mid-20s, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for impulse control, reasoning, and decision-making. This biological fact suggests that teenagers are naturally more impulsive and emotionally reactive, which may reduce their ability to fully evaluate the consequences of their actions.

An opposing perspective, psychological development during adolescence is strongly influenced by external factors. Many teenagers who commit serious offenses come from difficult environments, including financial hardship, poor educational access, dysfunctional families, substance misuse environment, or neighborhood violence. These conditions can significantly impact their behavior and restrict their ability to make rational decisions. Therefore, critics argue that society should address these root causes rather than concentrating solely on penalties.

Another important concern is the future consequences of placing teenagers in adult prisons. Adult detention centers are often severe and unsafe environments where young offenders may experience physical violence, psychological trauma, and negative influence from others. Instead of rehabilitation, such environments may reinforce criminal behavior and increase the likelihood of committing crimes again after release. This raises serious concerns about whether adult sentencing actually helps stop crime in the long term. In contrast, juvenile justice systems are designed with a rehabilitative approach. They focus on education, therapy, skill development, and behavioral correction. The aim of the programs to help young offenders reintegrate into society as responsible people. Research have shown that reintegration-focused systems are often more helpful in reducing repeat crimes compared to purely punitive approaches.

Additionally, the concept of fairness in justice is not only about punishment but also about opportunity for improving. Adolescents are still in a formative stage of life, and their personalities, values, and behaviors are not yet fully fixed. This means they have a higher potential for change compared to adults. Providing them with rehabilitation opportunities can transform their lives and reduce future crime rates, which ultimately benefits society as a whole. It is also important to consider the moral dimension of the issue. Treating teenagers as adult people in the criminal justice system raises moral questions about adulthood level maturity, maturity, and human development. While society should protect itself from serious offenses, it must also ensure that punishment does not eliminate the possibility of rehabilitation and future reintegration.

CONCLUSION

In summary, although violent crimes such as murder demand serious legal consequences, youths between 13–16 should not be automatically prosecuted as adults. Findings from psychology, neuroscience, and criminology shows that adolescents are still in the process of developing cognitively, emotionally, and socially, which affects their legal decisions and decision-making abilities. For this reason, treating them in the same way as fully developed adults may not always be appropriate or fair.

Therefore, a judicial system that balances responsibility with rehabilitation is considered more efficient and moral. Such a well-balanced system ensures that young offenders take responsibility for their actions while also receiving opportunities for education, therapy, and personal development. Ultimately, this not only delivers justice but also promotes future social stability by helping teenagers become part of society again as responsible and productive members of society .

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