The Socio-Economic Status of Adult Female Perpetrators of Criminal Offences in the Republic of Serbia

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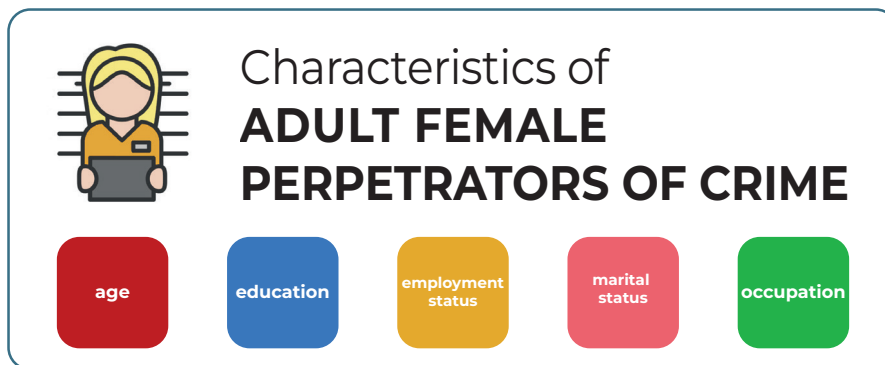
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Abstract: The subject of this paper is the research of socio-economic status of adult female perpetrators of criminal offences in the Republic of Serbia. For this purpose, the following characteristics of adult women perpetrators have been observed: age, marital status, education, employment status, occupation. Empirical research was conducted in which the structure of female perpetrators by age, by education, by marital status, by employment status and by occupation was calculated. The empirical research used data obtained from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia for 2021. The structure was calculated for criminal offences that have the largest share in total crime, namely, for criminal offences against life and limb, criminal offences against marriage and family, criminal offences against property, criminal offences against the economy, criminal offences against human's health and criminal offences against public peace and order. A comparison was made with the adult male perpetrators of criminal offences and with the total population of the Republic Serbia for each of the observed characteristics. The results of the research showed that female perpetrators have a higher unemployment rate and a lower educational structure than male perpetrators and the total population of the Republic of Serbia. The unemployment rate is very high and amounts to 38.7%, and one third of the female perpetrators do not have more than a primary education. The results reveal poor socio-economic status of adult female perpetrators, indicating the strong influence of socio-economic status on crime of female perpetrators in the Republic of Serbia.

Keywords: adult female perpetrators, socio-economic characteristics, crime, the Republic of Serbia

Graphical abstract

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INTRODUCTION

Theoretical assumptions that poverty and low socio-economic status could be important causes of crime have been verified through a large number of empirical studies conducted over the past three decades. Those studies were the result of a growing interest in the influence of economic factors on crime and the penetration of economic theory in crime research. Research has moved in several directions, and the most important research areas, as summarized in Draca and Machin (2015) were: crime and the labour market, link between crime and unemployment, the impact of wages on decisions to engage in criminal activities, crime and education. The results of empirical studies have confirmed the link between unemployment, poverty and crime.

A number of empirical studies comprise the connection between demographic characteristics of the population and crime. Another includes research on the influence of economic factors on crime. The aim of these studies was to examine the influence of poverty and deprivation on crime and beyond, to point out the economic causes of crime. Empirical studies have confirmed that the socio-economic status of perpetrators of criminal offences was low. Perpetrators of criminal offences have a lower education, a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the population, a lower income than the rest of the population, and a higher poverty rate. As observed in Rosenfeld and Messner (2013), all this is even more true for those who have committed property crimes and crimes with elements of violence, and especially for the prison population.

When it comes to women perpetrators, a study of adult female offenders in the USA (Dennis, 2008) reported that unemployment and being forced to rely on crime as the main source of income were the key reasons for women to commit crime. In a study for Ireland (Byrne & Trew, 2008) the importance of economic necessity to explain female offending have been highlighted. Female prison population in England and Wales is characterised with trauma history and property crimes are often directly related to family poverty and the need to care for children (Moloney et al., 2009). Another study for the USA (Cobbina, 2010) cited economic marginalisation and the poor economic status as the important components of women's pathway to crime. Based on numerous researches on gender differences between offenders in USA, Wright et al. (2012) concluded that female offenders are typically socially and economically marginalised; that they are less violent than men; more likely experience different forms of victimization, substance abuse and diagnoses of mental illness. In the research for Australia (Liddel & Martinovic, 2013) the link between socio-economic status and female offending has been confirmed. In Pemberton et al. (2019), factors that determine female offending in the USA were explored as along with the links between economic necessity and female offending.

There is a noticeable lack of similar research for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Very few authors deal with the socio-economic context of the crime, such as Gruszczyńska (2004) for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Lobonț et al. (2017) for Romania. These authors deal with the social and economic causes of crime, although not with the female perpetrators and their socio-economic status. Jadrešin and Mustapić (2014) examined the characteristics of female prisoners in Croatia in terms of their demographic, economic and psychological characteristics. They concluded that half of the female prisoners were convicted of economic crimes, and that their unemployment

rate was extremely high. In Koshevaliska and Maksimova (2019), a portrait of a female prisoner for the Republic of North Macedonia was sketched. The study found that 39% of them had no education and that 56.1% were unemployed.

Authors from the Republic of Serbia (Jugović et al., 2008) pointed out to social inequalities and poverty as causes of crime. Socio-economic characteristics of perpetrators of criminal offences have been investigated in Vukosavljević et al. (2014). Their research, however, referred to those convicted of crimes of theft and robbery in only one penitentiary, Zabela – Penal and Correctional Institution in the city of Požarevac, and did not include a large number of respondents nor did it take into account gender differences among respondents. The research on the impact of demographic and economic factors on perpetrators of criminal offences in the Republic of Serbia found that socio-economic status of perpetrators in Serbia was low and that there were indications that the status of female perpetrators was even worse (Radović-Stojanović & Tomić, 2019). It is precisely this status of female perpetrators that will be investigated in more detail in this paper.

The goal of this paper is to research the socio-economic status of adult female perpetrators of criminal offences in the Republic of Serbia and to show that their status is less favourable compared to the total population of Serbia. The research was based on the hypothesis that this status is unfavourable. In order to confirm the hypothesis, the empirical research was conducted in which the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of female perpetrators were examined. The structure of female perpetrators was calculated for each of these characteristics. The comparative analysis was made with the characteristics of the total population of the Republic of Serbia and of male perpetrators of criminal offences. Based on the results of the empirical research, a clearer picture was obtained about the socio-economic status of female perpetrators and the impact of this status on the crime of female perpetrators.

METHODS

The research is based on the statistical data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia from the field of Judiciary. Criminal offences are classified according to the Classification of Criminal Offences prescribed by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2006). For the purpose of the paper data for 2021 were used, which are the latest available data. The following characteristics of the adult female perpetrators were analysed: age, marital status, education, employment status, occupation. Age and marital status are the basic demographic characteristics, while education, employment status and occupation were expected to give a picture of the socio-economic status of adult female perpetrators. In addition, these are characteristics that have been analysed in the empirical studies mentioned in the previous section. The structure of convicted female perpetrators according to the mentioned characteristics, calculated as a percentage share of the observed characteristics of female perpetrators and their modalities in the total number of female perpetrators was calculated. The reason why the convicted, and not, for example, reported or accused perpetrators were analysed, is that in the case of convicted perpetrators, the criminal proceedings have been completed and the punishment has been determined, so that there is a clear picture of the number of female

perpetrators. Then, the comparative analysis has been performed with the corresponding structures for convicted adult male perpetrators and with the corresponding structures for the total population of the Republic of Serbia.

The structure of adult female perpetrators according to the stated characteristics for the following criminal offences was analysed: criminal offences against life and limb, criminal offences against marriage and family, criminal offences against property, criminal offences against the economy, criminal offences against human's health and criminal offences against public peace and order. These are, in fact, groups of criminal offences. Namely, within the Classification of Criminal Offences, all criminal offences are classified in 23 groups. These groups include related criminal offences. For example, criminal offences against life and limb include the criminal offences against human life and body, such as murder, aggravated murder, bodily injuries of varying severity and so on. Criminal offences against marriage and family are criminal offences related to the family, for example, domestic violence, neglecting and abusing family members, breach of family duties, etc. Criminal offences against property include an entire range of criminal offences related to property like theft, robbery, fraud, destroying and damaging someone else's property, unauthorised use of someone else's vehicle etc. Criminal offences against the economy are the criminal offences committed in performing economic activity, usually in enterprises, such as fraud, tax evasion, giving or accepting bribe, smuggling, money laundering, illegal production and trade, etc. Criminal offences against human's health include unlawful possession of narcotics, unlawful production and circulation of narcotics, medical malpractice, etc. Criminal offences against public peace and order include violent behaviour, violent behaviour at sports events, illegal state border crossing, human smuggling, unauthorised manufacture, possession and trafficking of firearms.

The mentioned six groups of criminal offences had the largest share in the structure of total crime: their share in the total number of convicted perpetrators in 2021 was 71.7% (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022b). Some of these groups of criminal offences are closely associated with the poor socio-economic status of perpetrators, namely, criminal offences against property, criminal offences against the economy and criminal offences against human's health. Those criminal offences are considered in theory as so-called "economic crime" (that is, crime committed to obtain economic benefits), while criminal offences against life and limb, criminal offences against marriage and family and criminal offences against public peace order are considered as "violent crime", which is characterized by violent behaviour and violent mentality of perpetrators.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the structure of convicted adult perpetrators by gender for the mentioned six groups of criminal offences.

The total number of convicted adult perpetrators for all criminal offences in 2021 in the Republic of Serbia was 27 508, of which 24 655 or 89.6% were men and 2 853 or 10.4% were women. The fact that women account for 10% of the total population of convicted perpetrators is common for many countries (Nikolić-Ristanović & Konstantinović-Vilić, 2018).

Table 1. *Convicted Adult Perpetrators by Gender, Republic of Serbia, 2021*

CRIMINAL OFFENCES	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Criminal offences against life and limb	1 344	93.9	88	6.1	1 432	100
Criminal offences against marriage and family	3 261	87.5	464	12.5	3 725	100
Criminal offences against property	5 826	86.9	882	13.1	6 708	100
Criminal offences against the economy	755	85.3	130	14.7	885	100
Criminal offences against human health	4 978	93.7	337	6.3	5 315	100
Criminal offences against public peace and order	1 586	95.3	78	4.7	1 664	100
Criminal offences subtotal	17 750	89.9	1 979	10.1	19 729	100
Other criminal offences	6 905	88.8	874	11.2	7 779	100
Criminal offences total	24 655	89.6	2 853	10.4	27 508	100

Source: Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022a; Author's calculation.

Table 2 shows the structure of perpetrators by criminal offences, that is, the percentage share of perpetrators who committed particular criminal offences in the total number of perpetrators (male, female and in total).

Table 2. *Convicted Adult Perpetrator by Criminal Offences, Republic of Serbia, 2021*

CRIMINAL OFFENCES	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Criminal offences against life and limb	1 344	93.9	88	6.1	1 432	100
Criminal offences against marriage and family	3 261	87.5	464	12.5	3 725	100
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Source: Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022a; Author's calculation.

The largest percentage of female perpetrators, 30.9%, was convicted of criminal offences against property. If criminal offences against the economy and criminal offences against human health were added to that, it follows that almost half or 47.3% of women were convicted of criminal offences that are considered as "economic crimes".

Table 3 shows the structure of female perpetrators by age. In the structure of female perpetrators, the largest share involved female perpetrators aged 30–39 (27.2%). Criminal offences against human health were committed mostly by younger female perpetrators, aged 18–20, 21–24, and 25–29 (all three groups amounting to the total of 42.4%). Criminal offences against life and limb and criminal offences against public peace and order were committed mostly by women of older age groups, over 40 years old (48.9% and 60.3% respectively when percentages were added). This result was somewhat unexpected, because these criminal offences are common for younger population and associated especially with young male perpetrators.

Table 3. *Convicted Adult Female Perpetrators by Age, Republic of Serbia, 2021 (%)*

CRIMINAL OFFENCES	18–20	21–24	25–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60 and over	Unknown	Total
Criminal offences against life and limb	3.4	9.1	17.0	20.5	11.4	15.9	21.6	1.1	100
Criminal offences against marriage and family	1.3	5.8	18.5	39.9	21.8	6.5	6.0	0.2	100
Criminal offences against property	7.0	12.7	11.9	25.6	21.2	11.8	8.5	1.3	100
Criminal offences against the economy	3.8	3.8	6.2	26.9	0.3	21.5	36.9	0.8	100
Criminal offences against human health	11.6	16.6	14.2	27.3	18.1	5.3	4.2	2.7	100
Criminal offences against public peace and order	2.6	5.1	10.3	20.5	21.8	16.7	21.8	1.2	100
Criminal offences subtotal	5.9	10.7	13.6	28.9	21.2	10.5	10.2	1.2	100
Other criminal offences	4.6	7.9	9.5	23.5	20.5	16.2	11.2	1.6	100
Criminal offences total	5.5	9.8	12.4	27.2	21.0	12.2	10.5	1.3	100

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 4 shows the structure of convicted male and female perpetrators by their marital status. The structure of convicted female perpetrators of criminal offences is dominated by married persons, whose share is 35.8%. The share of married women is higher for all criminal offences, except for criminal offences against the economy (38.8%), which are committed to a slightly greater extent by unmarried women (41.2%). A large percentage of married women (58.1%) committed criminal offences against public order and peace, which is somewhat surprising, considering that these crimes are mostly associated with violent behaviour and more serious crimes. On the other hand, unmarried men committed more criminal offences than married men, especially crimes against life and limb (46.2%), crimes against property (43.3%) and, to the greatest extent, crimes against human health (64.2%).

Table 4. *Convicted Adult Perpetrators, Male and Female, by Marital Status, Republic of Serbia, 2021 (%)*

CRIMINAL OFFENCES	Unmarried		Married		Widowed		Divorced		Unknown	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Criminal offences against life and limb	46.2	28.4	37.3	33.0	1.9	19.3	8.3	12.5	6.3	6.8
Criminal offences against marriage and family	26.8	26.0	35.2	34.8	1.6	1.8	30.6	31.0	5.8	6.4
Criminal offences against property	43.3	20.7	38.6	32.1	1.3	3.7	9.5	33.4	7.4	10.1
Criminal offences against the economy	19.3	41.2	60.4	38.8	0.7	2.3	10.9	10.3	8.7	7.5
Criminal offences against human health	64.9	27.2	21.7	40.0	0.4	9.0	6.4	15.6	6.6	8.2
Criminal offences against public peace and order	40.0	19.4	44.0	58.1	2.0	2.0	8.7	12.3	5.3	8.1
Criminal offences subtotal	45.2	20.0	34.5	44.6	1.2	10.0	12.4	20.8	6.7	4.6
Other criminal offences	33.2	64.0	46.5	21.8	2.5	0.7	10.1	6.9	7.7	6.6
Criminal offences total	41.9	27.7	37.9	35.8	1.5	8.7	11.8	18.1	7.0	9.7

Source: Author's calculation.

Divorced women committed criminal offences against property in a significantly higher percentage than divorced men (33.4% versus 9.5%). Moreover, divorced women had a higher share for all of the observed criminal offences than divorced men, except for criminal offences against the economy.

In Table 5 the educational structure of perpetrators, male and female, and for the total population of the Republic of Serbia are presented.

Table 5. *Convicted Adult Perpetrators, Male and Female, and the Total Population of the Republic of Serbia, by Education, 2021 (%)*

Perpetrators and the population of the Republic of Serbia	No school	Incomplete (1–7 years)	Elementary school	High school	Higher education	College education	Unknown	Total
Adult female perpetrators	4.6	8.7	23.0	43.3	3.8	7.5	9.1	100
Adult male perpetrators	1.8	5.8	22.0	56.5	2.4	4.3	7.2	100
Criminal offences total	2.1	6.1	22.1	55.1	2.5	4.6	7.5	100
Female population of the Republic of Serbia	4.2	13.7	21.5	43.9	5.5	10.8	0.4	100
Male population of the Republic of Serbia	1.0	8.1	20.0	54.3	5.8	10.4	0.4	100
Total population of the Republic of Serbia	2.7	11.0	20.8	48.9	5.7	10.6	0.3	100

Source: Author's calculation.

The educational structure of female perpetrators is more unfavourable than the educational structure of the total population of the Republic of Serbia. The share of female per-

petrators without school, with incomplete and with completed elementary school is only higher compared to the total population in the Republic of Serbia, while the share of female perpetrators with completed high school, higher and college education is lower in relation to the total population and female population in the Republic of Serbia. The educational structure of female perpetrators is also less favourable than of male perpetrators. When the percentages are added up (no school, incomplete and completed elementary school), we have 36.3 % of female perpetrators with lower education, compared to 29.6 % of male perpetrators and 34.5 % of the total population of the Republic of Serbia.[4] The share of female perpetrators with a higher and college education is slightly higher than the share of male perpetrators but lower than the share for the total population.

Table 6 shows the educational structure of female perpetrators by criminal offences. When added together, the share of female perpetrators who have no school, have incomplete elementary school or have completed elementary school was very high for criminal offences against life and limb (in total 53.4%), for criminal offences against property (in total 49.2%) and for criminal offences against marriage and family (in total 45.6%).

Table 6. *Convicted Adult Female Perpetrators by Education, Republic of Serbia, 2021 (%)*

CRIMINAL OFFENCES	No school	Incomplete (1−7 years)	Elementary school	High school	Higher education	College education	Unknown	Total
Criminal offences against life and limb	14.8	13.6	25.0	33.0	2.3	8.0	3.3	100
Criminal offences against marriage and family	3.4	8.8	33.4	42.0	2.6	2.2	7.6	100
Criminal offences against property	9.2	14.5	25.5	35.3	2.7	5.2	7.6	100
Criminal offences against the economy	1.5	1.5	10.8	62.3	6.2	13.8	3.9	100
Criminal offences against human health	1.2	4.2	16.6	57.3	3.9	9.2	7.6	100
Criminal offences against public peace and order	1.3	5.1	21.8	52.6	3.8	7.7	7.7	100
Criminal offences subtotal	5.9	10.2	24.7	43.0	3.1	6.0	7.1	100
Other criminal offences	1.7	5.3	19.0	44.1	5.1	11.0	13.8	100
Criminal offences total, women	4.6	8.7	23.0	43.3	3.8	7.5	9.1	100

Source: Author's calculation.

Table 7 shows the unemployment rate, employment rate, activity rate and inactivity rate for adult male and female perpetrators of criminal offences, for adult perpetrators in total and persons of working age, male and female population (aged 15 and over) in the Republic of Serbia.

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4 When comparing, it should be borne in mind that the data on the educational structure of the population refer to the year of the last Census in the Republic of Serbia 2011 (there is no more recent data), while the educational structure of the perpetrators was calculated on the basis of the data for 2021. The assumption is that there were no major changes in the educational structure of the total population in the meantime. In addition, it should be kept in mind that perpetrators of criminal offences are also part of the total population for which the educational structure is calculated in Census

Table 7. *Unemployment Rate, Employment Rate, Activity Rate and Inactivity Rate: Adult Male and Female Perpetrators and the Population Aged 15 and Over, Republic of Serbia, 2021 (%)*

Perpetrators/Total population aged 15 and over	Unemployment rate	Employment rate	Activity rate	Inactivity rate	Higher education
Adult female perpetrators	38.7	40.1	65.5	23.0	11.6
Adult male perpetrators	30.1	58.0	83.0	6.7	10.3
Perpetrators, total	30.9	56.1	81.2	8.4	10.4
Female population of the Republic of Serbia, aged 15 and over	12.1	41.3	47	53.0	–
Male population of the Republic of Serbia, aged 15 and over	10.2	56.5	62.9	37.1	–
Persons aged 15 and over, Republic of Serbia, total	11.0	48.6	54.7	45.3	–

Source: Author's calculation.

According to the methodology of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, activity rate is the percentage share of active population in the total population aged 15 and over. Active population includes all employed and unemployed persons, so the active population is, in fact, the total labour force of a country. Employment rate is the percentage share of the employed in the total population aged 15 and over. Unemployment rate is the percentage share of the unemployed in the total active population. Inactivity rate is the percentage share of inactive population in the total population aged 15 and over. Inactive population includes all persons aged 15 and over who are not classified into employed and unemployed population. Inactive population includes students, homemakers, retired persons, as well as persons who did not perform any work in the reference week, did not actively seek work or were not available to start working within two weeks following the reference week (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022c).

Table 8. *Convicted Adult Female Perpetrators by Employment Status, Republic of Serbia, 2021 (%)*

Perpetrators/Total population aged 15 and over	Unemployment rate	Employment rate	Activity rate	Inactivity rate	Higher education
Criminal offences against life and limb	38.6	28.4	50.0	45.5	19.3
Criminal offences against marriage and family	44.2	37.1	66.4	22.4	11.2
Criminal offences against property	50.0	32.2	64.4	25.3	3.5
Criminal offences against the economy	19.8	65.4	81.5	9.2	9.2
Criminal offences against human health	35.5	49.0	76.0	14.2	9.8
Criminal offences against public peace and order	30.2	47.4	67.9	23.1	9.0
Criminal offences subtotal	42.3	38.8	67.5	22.5	7.7
Other criminal offences	29.6	43.1	61.0	24.0	20.4
Criminal offences total, women	38.7	40.1	65.5	23.0	11.6

Source: Author's calculation.

The unemployment rate of female perpetrators (38.7%) was higher than the rate in population of the Republic of Serbia aged 15 and over (11.0%) and was higher than the unemployment rate of male perpetrators (30.1%).

Unemployment rate, employment rate, activity rate and inactivity rate by groups of criminal offences were calculated and are shown in Table 8. The female perpetrators of criminal offences against property had the highest unemployment rate (50.0%). Unemployment rates are high for the other criminal offences as well, amounting to over 30%, and for criminal offences against marriage and family even 44.2%.

Table 9 shows the structure of male and female perpetrators by occupation.

Table 9. *Convicted Male and Female Adult Perpetrators by Occupation, Republic of Serbia, 2021 (%)*

CRIMINAL OFFENCES	Managers, experts, professional associates	Officers, salesmen, personal service workers	Farmers, craftsmen, workers, drivers	Other occupations	Unknown
Criminal offences against life and limb	36.0	28.0	4.0	12.0	20.0
Criminal offences against marriage and family	28.5	25.0	1.2	21.5	23.8
Criminal offences against property	29.2	26.1	3.2	19.7	21.8
Criminal offences against the economy	45.9	18.8	4.7	23.5	7.1
Criminal offences against human health	37.6	26.1	2.4	17.0	17.0
Criminal offences against public peace and order	45.9	18.9	2.7	18.9	13.6
Criminal offences subtotal, women	33.7	24.7	2.7	19.7	19.2
Other criminal offences, women	36.1	23.6	4.0	20.7	15.6
Criminal offences total, women	34.5	24.4	3.1	20.0	18.0
Criminal offences total, man	20.2	13.4	27.9	15.0	23.5
Criminal offences total, man and women	21.3	14.2	26.1	15.4	23.0

Source: Republički zavod za statistiku (unpublished data, available on demand); Author's calculation.

The employed female perpetrators of criminal offences were mainly engaged in occupations like managers, experts, and professional associates (34.5%). One quarter of the total number of the employed female perpetrators (24.4%) were engaged in occupations that require at least high school and a certain degree of expertise like officers, salesmen, personal service workers. Among male perpetrators, occupations that do not require great expertise and education and which are generally less paid, such as workers, drivers, craftsmen, prevail (27.9%).

DISCUSSION

SThe female perpetrators of criminal offences in the Republic of Serbia are mostly active, yet unemployed population. The activity rate of female perpetrators is high (65.5%), and so is the unemployment rate (38.7%). The unemployment rate of female perpetrators is three times higher than the unemployment rate of the population aged 15 years and over in the Republic of Serbia (which amounts to 11.0%) and it is 8.6% higher than the unemployment rate of male perpetrators (which amounts to 30.1%). The educational structure of female perpetrators is worse both in relation to the total population of the Republic of Serbia and in relation to male perpetrators. The results of the research confirmed the hypothesis from which the research started, that the socio-economic status of female perpetrators is unfavourable.

Of the total number of convicted female perpetrators, almost one third (30.9%) were convicted of criminal offences against property. What's more, when the percentages are added up, almost half of the female perpetrators (47.3%) were convicted of criminal offences from one of the three groups of criminal offences that are considered as economic crimes (criminal offences against the property, criminal offences against the economy and criminal offences against human health). Divorced female perpetrators committed all the observed criminal offences in a higher percentage than divorced male perpetrators (except those against the economy), which indicates that their economic position is more difficult.

The results of the research indicate a certain social polarization of the female perpetrators of criminal offences: they are unemployed, but, if they are employed, then a significant part of them are in the group of occupations that are generally associated with higher incomes and better economic status (managers, experts, professional associates). Regardless, it can be assumed that the standard of living of female perpetrators is on average poor, but in order to verify this assumption, we should have data on their income, if they are employed, or the income per household member, if they are unemployed. However, the questionnaires used to collect data on perpetrators in courts and prosecutor's offices do not include questions about the perpetrators' income, which is why it was not possible to produce a complete socio-economic portrait of female perpetrators.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the research indicate the influence of the socio-economic status on crime of the female perpetrators of criminal offences in the Republic of Serbia. Poor educational structure and an extremely high unemployment rate reveal low socio-economic status of female perpetrators. The female perpetrators of criminal offences are the population with very high unemployment rate, and one third of the female perpetrators have no more than primary education. Almost half of the women were convicted of criminal offences that are considered as "economic crimes" which indicates that in the absence of employment and education, women turn to crime as the source of income. Divorced women are in a more difficult economic situation than divorced men and they committed criminal offences against property in a significantly higher percentage than divorced men. It is clear that women perpetrators come from vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups. That fact

indicates the need for economic, educational and social policy measures aimed at improving the socio-economic position of vulnerable groups of women in the function of crime prevention.

There is still plenty of room for research into the socio-economic status of the female perpetrators of criminal offences in the Republic of Serbia. If the income of female perpetrators were known, their standard of living could be investigated in more detail. Some unexpected results obtained by this research, such as the fact that criminal offences were committed mainly by women of the older age groups, and that the structure of employed women perpetrators is dominated by women in professions that have higher incomes, also require more detailed future research.

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